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THE CHOIR INVISIBLE

AND OTHER SERMONS

BY

JOHN WHITE CHADWICK

MINISTER OF THE SECOND UNITARIAN SOCIETY IN BROOKLYN, N.Y.

TWENTY-THIRD AND TWENTY-FOURTH SERIES

BOSTON

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CONTENTS

TWENTY-THIRD SERIES.

		Page
I.	The Choir Invisible	1
II.	Our Gains and Losses	17
III.	The Wandering Jew	31
IV.	The Character of Jesus	43
V.	The Bible of the Heart	59
VI.	The Transfigured Life	75
VII.	Unitarian Advantages and Obligations	89
VIII.	The Divine Example	103

TWENTY-FOURTH SERIES.

I.	Wrestling with God	1
II.	The Wisdom of Fools	15
III.	Lives Worth Living	29
IV.	The Great Perhaps	43
V.	Religious Ideals and Religious Unity	59
VI.	The Unknown Life	73
VII.	The Higher Secularism	87
VIII.	Life in Ourselves	101

THE CHOIR INVISIBLE

We have a poem and a novel with this title. Why not a sermon, too? The poem is a great one, one of the greatest. The novel? It is more than tolerably good. The sermon?

> "Measure not the work
> Till the day's out and the labor done,
> Then bring your gauges."

I have no criticism to offer on Mr. Allen's novel or George Eliot's poem. Hers is the choir invisible of those immortal dead who live again in lives made better by their former living in this hot and dusty world. Mine is the choir invisible of those who, while they are yet alive, do the same work as her immortal dead, and do it generally in a more effective way than they, because they are alive and here. What I am bent upon is to celebrate the quiet side of life, the silent forces of the world, the men and women who without noise or shouting, without repute or fame, contribute something, much, to the sum total of the world's work, the common good,

> "The bravely dumb who do their deed,
> And scorn to blot it with a name."

In the world below man there are hints and prophecies of what is true of man's estate. How silent for the most part are the processes whereby the earth yields her increase and sustains the wasting heart of man! The tempests and tornadoes have their place and part in the economy of nature, and, roughly as they handle him, are, no doubt, the farmer's great allies; and yet not such allies as are the habit-

ual sunshine and the quiet dew and rain. Time was when the method of nature in the making of the world was regarded as a series of catastrophes; but it is not so regarded now. Not in the thunder or the fire, but in the still small voice the god resides who has decreed these things. Those processes whereby coast lines and whole countries have been elevated or depressed have been, we are assured, as gradual as the drifting of those sands whose weight lies heavy on the cities of the Chaldean plain, a coverlet here thirty and there sixty feet in thickness folded down on their eternal sleep; or as gradual as the sinking in the sand of the beach of the fisherman's stake to which he moors his dory overnight. The wonder is how rapidly these changes are effected when the process goes on steadily from year to year. I know in Marblehead a pebbly bar, some rods in width, which, since it was my playground fifty years ago, has shifted bodily, just by the moving of a few pebbles every tide a little further to the west; and another bar, by which my grandfather used to cross on horseback to a little island off the coast, is now so washed away that even at low tide vessels of some depth of hold can sail across.

Not only have the changes in the earth's topography been of this gradual kind, but those of which the heavens are the scene. Time was, I have been reading recently, when the earth's revolution, with the moon stuck fast upon her side, was accomplished in two hours and forty minutes. Why not another story "looking backward" to those days of ideal brevity, only an hour and twenty minutes between dawn and dusk? This, by the way: the appropriate consideration is that the stupendous change involved in the transition from a day two hours and forty minutes long to a day twenty-four hours long has been as gradual as the change whereby each day is softened into evening, and the evening darkened into night, for you and me. And not only are these things true, but it is also true that, where we have catastrophe in nature, earthquake and volcanic action and the cyclone's awful whirl, these things are prepared for as

quietly and regularly as the striking of the clock by the slow regular movement of its machinery. Looking at the matter broadly, it seems to be a fact that in the shaping and the conduct of the natural world it is from the choir invisible that the best part of the great world-music comes, that the silent forces and the quiet processes are of paramount importance, and are the habitual purveyors of our human joy and peace.

Now you are all aware how dangerous it is to predicate natural law of the spiritual world, meaning by that the same kind of law in the spiritual world that we find in the natural. It is especially dangerous to do this without being very certain what the natural law is. Yet there are certainly profound analogies between the spiritual and the natural, — the moral and the physical, I might better say. And it is very certain that the processes of the moral world find an impressive analogue in the processes of the physical in the particular we are considering. In morals as in physics God is not so much in the whirlwind and the fire as in the still small voice. The great things are the little things, the infinitesimal increments of evil and of good, which, given enough of them, make up the aggregates which we call character and progress and success, — the multitudes of humble folk, the sum of whose activities are more important than the towering personalities of the exceptional and god-like men.

Consider how it is in the making and unmaking of character. Our preachers and our novelists, for the most part, — and our popular persuasions fall into line with their opinion, — place all their emphasis on the exceptional moments, the great opportunities which invite men and women to the splendor of some virtuous action or to be "magnificent in sin." It is as if life, for the most part, were a level plain which does not really count, and then there comes some valley of decision, which the great hills hem in on every side; and there, just where the pass is narrowest, the strong man meets his enemy, and fights his battle once

for all. The poets, too, have lent themselves to this view of life with much unanimity, Lowell singing, —

"Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide," —

while of Browning nothing is more characteristic than his belief in the great moment, the great opportunity, losing which everything is lost. Nothing distinguishes Browning from Tennyson so sharply as this emphasis on the dramatic situation. Tennyson is the poet of progress, of the slow accretion of the moral forces of the individual and state. In the language of geology, his doctrine is uniformitarian, while Browning's is catastrophic. Now I, too, believe in the great moments and the great men, and that we must economize them both, make the most of them when they appear. But, in order that we may make the most of the great moments, the special opportunities, we must make the most of the little moments, the little opportunities, that are coming to us all the time, thrusting their broken, rusty, not their whole and flashing, jewel-hilted swords into our hands. I have been reading somewhere lately that men are better than they think themselves, — that, given a moral crisis, the best comes to the fore; and I believe that this is so. But it is so because in the moments that we call uncritical, the moments of life's daily commonplace experience, men's moral choices are habitually of the higher rather than the lower things. And often, too, if you could analyze the critical situation, the moment "to which heaven and hell have joined great issues," you would find that all depends upon some central will that has been hardening its strength by small innumerable fidelities from year to year. "Let there be one wise man in a company," says Emerson, "and all are wise, so rapid is the contagion." Let there be one brave man in a company of panic-stricken men, and straightway all are brave, or, if not brave, then calm and mindful of their common danger, not each man for himself. The one brave man summons the latent bravery or decency in all the rest. Life has unquestionably its moments of supreme importance,

— moments in which we are tempted of God or tempted of the devil, as the case may be; but these do not negative the proverb that God always hangs the greatest weights upon the smallest wires. Only there are a great many of them: that is the real point. How often do we hear of men of the best social reputation doing things that are abominable in one way or another! It seems astonishing, miraculous. But it would not seem at all so if we knew the private history. If we knew that, we should know that the catastrophe has been prophesied and prepared for and made inevitable by a thousand and ten thousand petty lapses from the strait and narrow way.

There are men and women living the most shameful lives who can look back upon a time of happy innocence, when they could not conceive it possible that they should ever be what they are now; and yet between that innocence and this degradation there has been no single leap or fall at any time. The whole of that enormous difference has been made up of infinitesimal changes from a higher to a lower grade. And, as it is with the *descensus Averni*, the going down into the pit, so is it with the scaling of the heights.

> Those "heights by great men gained and kept
> Were not attained by sudden flight;
> But they, while their companions slept,
> Were toiling upward in the night."

Not only so, but, while their companions slept *by day*, they were toiling up in the sun's beating glare.

There is, then, a choir of invisible actions,— choices, duties, and surrenders, each one of these apparently of meagre voice,— which in its coherent unity makes an undying music in the world and in the individual life. But this is not the only choir invisible I wish to celebrate. Emerson has written wisely of the uses of great men, and Carlyle has set forth the doctrine of hero-worship with lofty eloquence. Such things are right and good. We cannot prize our heroes and our men of mark too much. I yield to no one in my

admiration of great personalities. To read and write about them has been one of the rarest pleasures of my life. And yet I am obliged to recognize that we habitually exaggerate the part they play on life's great stage. Read the biography of any great man, and his biography appears to be the history of his time. All the great movements seem to originate with him, and to be carried on by him from stage to stage. Let the biography, for example, be that of Henry Clay. Then turn to the biography of Daniel Webster, a contemporary giant in those days, and you get the same impression. They cannot both be true. Neither of them is true. Each of these powerful men had great allies, and many of the most meagre reputation, and thousands who have no memorial, and who yet were honorable men, and contributed their several parts into the treasury of the common good. There is no greater blunder than the idea that you can read the history of a great people by reading the biographies of its greatest men. Even if you read all the biographies and corrected the exaggerations of each separate one by the exaggerations of the rest, you would still be far enough from a sound general conception.

"Was there anybody else but you?" inquired the little boy, who was listening, awe-struck, to the story of his father's prowess in the Civil War. Was there anybody else but Grant or Lincoln in those times that tried men's souls? Oh, yes, thousands and millions. Grant did not fight his battles all alone, as the great captains sometimes actually did in former times. He fought them with the accumulated strength of all his officers and men, and those who kept them in the field, and the brave women who had, as Nansen said of his sweet wife, "the courage to let them go." If Dumas had written his "Vicomte de Bragelonne" as a satire upon the ordinary conceptions of history, it could hardly have been a better one than it is now. You who have read those ten somewhat doubtful but certainly delightful volumes know that the history of Europe was carried on almost entirely for some half a century by the three guards-

men who are the heroes of the tale. It is too much so with our histories in general. They are hardly less misleading than the biographies, so much do they exaggerate the influence and control of individual men. Tolstoï goes to the opposite extreme, and insists that you might eliminate Napoleon, and not affect the course of European history to an appreciable degree. That is absurd, of course; but it is hardly more absurd than the exaggeration of the kings and captains in the average history.

No history was ever more absolutely the biography of an individual than the history of the United States during the Presidency of Lincoln. The Biography of Lincoln by Nicolay and Hay has been criticised adversely because it is so much a history of the war in all its parts and ramifications. And yet this same biography, which shows how those long arms reached out and those expressive hands laid hold upon a thousand and ten thousand influences and powers, and subjected them to his humane and consecrated will, shows just as plainly what immense and wide co-operation went to the doing of his work. And that this was so no one was so profoundly conscious as Lincoln himself; and his great heart went out each day in gratitude and praise for the statesmen who helped him in his council and the generals who helped him in the field, and most of all for the innumerable soldiers in the ranks, and the plain, common people everywhere who put their trust in him. Never was man more dominant than he in a great cause; but, if his was the leading voice in that great music, with infinite pathos sounding above all the rest, the choir invisible was thousands strong, singing a vast "Amen!" to his immortal song.

"History," said Napoleon, "is a fable agreed upon"; and in no respect is it more fabulous than in its exaggeration of the great and even the greatest men. What makes Green's History of England the best of all histories is that it takes account not only of the kings and wars, but of the people's total life,— their industries, their habits, their literature and art,— and holds fast to the idea that these last were

really the important things. What a miserable business the world's history would have been if the historians had told the whole or half of it in their big volumes, which are so largely taken up with the accounts of battles and sieges and the personal rivalries of men as clamorous and as greedy as so many kites and crows! Victor Hugo tells us that, when the barricades were being stormed in Paris and defended with incalculable courage, a few blocks off you could hear the click of billiard-balls in the cafés. And I like to think that, simultaneously with the great wars and fightings to which history is devoted for the most part, there was always going on a great deal of men's ordinary life. They were loving and being loved. Children were being born to them, and they were glad of that. They were bending their strong backs above their daily tasks, and getting so the satisfaction which a man always gets from any piece of work well done. It would go hard with us at any time if our sole dependence were upon the famous men and women. These are extremely useful, if only to make good the loss and waste of all the drones in the great human hive. They do well if they do this. They cannot do the work of all on whom the burden of the world's great work is laid.

Have you read Kipling's latest poem, — "Pharaoh and the Sergeant"? It is not one of his best. It is hardly poetry at all. But it has a moral that is of much wider application than the valley of the Nile to which it is specifically applied. Its hero is a Sergeant What's-'is-name, who made good English soldiers out of such stuff as there was in Africa to make them out of; but no credit has he ever got.

> "Though he drilled a black man white,
> Though he made a mummy fight,
> He will still continue Sergeant What's-'is-name.
> But the everlasting miracle's the same."

The everlasting miracle is the same wherever there is quiet and effective work to be done and little or nothing ever known or said about it. Sergeant What's-'is-name is a won-

derfully ubiquitous, quite omnipresent individual. If the truth were known, there are at least a dozen or twenty of him in each smaller town or village of the United States and Europe, in larger towns and cities a proportionately greater number, and persons of his name, more or less awkwardly translated, are no doubt on duty in Asia, Africa, and South America. Wherever he abides, he is doing work that is necessary and indispensable in a very simple, noiseless, unobtrusive way; and, generally, it is better work than that done by Mr. Kipling's sergeant. Instead of drilling barbarians into soldiers, whose business is to kill, he is drilling them into men, whose business is to make alive. And so the everlasting miracle goes on. So the choir invisible recruits its membership from the innumerable places in which men and women do their daily work bravely and cheerfully, and with very little "honorable mention" or encouragement or praise.

One aspect of this matter came home to me at Saratoga, as it always does when I go to any general gathering of our ministers and people. I was impressed, as I always am at such times and in such places, with the number of men of whom the denomination as a whole knows little or nothing. They do not appear on our platforms, they do not write for our papers; but, as I talk with them, they often seem to me to be more studious and thoughtful than our men of more repute. While they are musing, the fire of steady purpose, thought, and aspiration burns; and from their quiet, uneventful lives there goes out into the people whom they serve such streams of help and cheer, of blessing and of peace, as ought to make their mornings and their evenings glad.

As it is here, so it is everywhere. I make no invidious comparisons. The world is a big place; and here and there, and often, there is, very likely, work needing to be done which cannot very well be done without much noise and shouting. All that I plead for is for some ampler recognition of the silent forces, the secret service in which so many are engaged. These silent forces are in no small degree

the forces of social progress and renovation and reform. We have had few more interesting or important books than Lecky's "History of Rationalism in Europe," and from beginning to end it was a testimony to the silent forces operative in the world of intellectual growth. The contention was that the great errors are not battered down by argument, but are gradually undermined by the slow stream of quiet meditation. How often does an adverse argument only seem to bite-in the opinion that is not very deep at first! And herein is made good that saying of the New Testament, — "Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." Lecky, I think, minimized unduly the strength of argument. What is true is that no chastening of this kind seemeth to be joyous when it is first received, but afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of conviction to them that are exercised thereby. The argument at first rejected sinks into the mind, and there works and works, until the man wakes some fine morning, and finds his opinions on important matters radically changed. Those who read much biography or know much of "men of light and leading" will find that few of them go through life without some radical transformation of their philosophical or political ideas. But the process of this transformation is so gradual that the man can seldom tell how it began or by what increments of change it came full circle.

There is much noise and shouting in our political campaigns; and we call them educational, as no doubt they are, to some extent. But are they not much better calculated to excite political passions than to encourage serious thought? It is the quiet after-thought that answers best the ends of rational conviction. The years between one national election and another are the happy hunting-ground where the big game is found which nourishes the fibre of political independency and the spirit of political revolt.

And so, too, in regard to the spasms of virtue which from time to time lay hold of great municipalities, and shake them as a tree is shaken by the gale. These spasms do not

mean so much as they appear to at the time. The cry is, "Turn the rascals out!" but mainly with a view of getting other rascals in. The enthusiasm for the independent candidate is generally in proportion to the persuasion that he is not really independent, but at bottom a good Republican or Democrat, as the case may be. If our great municipalities are to be governed by the people and for the people, and not for the bosses and their friends, this consummation so devoutly to be wished will not be reached by any spasms of virtue, punctuating long periods of indifference and lapse, but through a slowly widening apprehension of those principles of municipal government which have come to be accepted by all the great authorities in political science, and which were so admirably formulated by the Republican members of our last constitutional convention in an address they issued, explaining the changes made in the constitution and their reasons for making them. They said: —

> We seek to separate in the larger cities municipal elections from State and national elections, to the end that the business affairs of our great municipal corporations may be managed upon their own merits, uncontrolled by national and State politics and to the end also that the great issues of national and State politics may be determined upon their merits, free from the disturbing and often demoralizing effect of local contests.

Only when these principles are generally understood and cordially accepted will the government of our great cities work habitually through honorable means to the great end of what is best for all. Till then, the better they are understood, the more deliberately they will be repudiated by the managers of our partisan organizations. Till then we shall have our spasms of virtue as often as the stench of municipal corruption becomes quite intolerable; and then we shall slip back again, by slow and sure degrees, into the abominable slough. Till then, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, those who believe in the non-partisan conduct of municipal business must quietly and patiently

and unremittingly hold their appointed way. Browning is right: —

"All men become good creatures, but so slow."

The worlds of science and invention and discovery and art afford innumerable and sometimes tragical, or at least pathetic, illustrations of that aspect of our common life I am endeavoring to portray. All of these furnish members to the choir invisible, some of them with voices of great compass, some of them piping faint, but cheerily. Schiller made his contribution to the sermon I am preaching when he said, —

"Never, believe me, appear the immortals,
Never alone."

And sometimes their great companions are hardly less conspicuous than themselves. But there are others who are not conspicuous. They are like the planets, which, we imagine, move like our own round the fixed stars of heaven. Like and unlike. The most powerful telescope cannot discover these planets on the clearest nights. But to such telescopes as we bring to bear upon the history of science and of art there are revealed about each master-spirit many of less piercing light.

Sometimes it seems the merest accident that this one, and not that, is selected for the applause of many generations. For the majority of people Darwin stands out alone, a high priest of science after the order of Melchizedek, without father or mother. For a few, he and Wallace are like those double stars of which the astronomers have discovered so many revolving about a common centre of gravity. But any one who has read any good history of the doctrine of evolution knows how many labored before these, how gradual the development of the doctrine, what a multitudinous choir, invisible to any ordinary gaze, has made the mighty music swell. It is a foolish business to eliminate from the greatness of the individual all that is proper to his time, the fact being that his greatness consists very largely

in his taking up into himself that which is proper to his time. You could not have a Columbus except in an age of discovery, nor a Shakspere except in an age of dramatic poetry, nor a Watt or Morse or Edison except in an age of invention.

Back of every successful discovery or invention you will find, if you look close enough, a host of failures, as we call them, but failures that were approximations to the ultimate success, without which approximations success would never have been possible.

And it is so with every great political or social gain. Back of Lincoln is Garrison, and back of Garrison is Lundy, with "The Genius of Universal Emancipation" in his dusty knapsack and his glowing heart. Good things come not unheralded, or, if they do, they do not come to stay.

So do not the books and social theories and philosophical systems which make the most contemporary noise. How many of the books that last are gradual discoveries! Jane Austen's novels on their first appearance did not sell like "Trilby" and "The Christian"; but how safely they go sailing down the stream of time, and how soon the others will have had their day, and cease to be! The greater the bluster over a new book, the more premature, generally, is its decease. Is not Kidd's "Social Evolution" already quite extinct, and who will be looking backward to Mr. Bellamy's celebrated socialistic fantasy when the twentieth century arrives?

I would not push this thought too far. Scott made an immediate furore; and I imagine he will last when Dickens, or even Thackeray, is a fading light. On the other hand, it may well be that books of our own time, of which we make no particular account, will some day exclaim, like the humorist's islanders of San Salvador on the arrival of Columbus, "We are discovered at last," and enjoy a long and happy fame.

There is a homelier illustration of my doctrine, which comes closer to my heart than any of these last. It is

that which has been charmingly indicated in one of our magazines under the caption, "Sisters of the Saints." There are not only sisters but brothers, fathers, and mothers, too, all those who stand up close about the men of genius and of power and fame, and are to them the goodness and the strength of God, comforting their sorrow, patient with their irritable ways, believing in them like Kadijah in Mohammed, until the world comes round and puts itself in line with them. The loveliest phrase in Wordsworth's loveliest lyric was contributed by his wife, of whom we hear very little, while of his sister Dorothy we hear much. Doubtless the wife gave him many better things than this, — the constant love and thoughtful furtherance which were the inspirations of his highest moods. And how often, if we could follow up the stream of genius to its source, we should find it in the dear breast of some wife or mother or sister or friend, utterly unknown to fame, yet offering their living hearts to be transfused into the living heart on which they lean,— as the oak leans upon the vine it nourishes, and holds up for the sun to kiss, the breezes to caress!

But I would come a little nearer home. For it is not only in association with the great and famous ones that you find the members of the choir invisible, rank behind rank. Genius is not so common as to require many sisters of the saints, or sinners, to pour their life into its veins, to stand by it in the day of trouble. But the choir invisible is a choir thousands and millions strong; and, consequently, there are those who are members of it everywhere,— unknown, and yet, thank God, well known to some of us. Here it is, perhaps, a brother or a sister working hard and practising much self-denial, in order that a brother or a sister may have the coveted opportunity to go to school or college, to study music or some other art. Here, again, it is some man who might, if he would swerve a little, only just a little, from the straight path of rectitude, get some position or emolument which he very much desires; but he will not swerve. Here

it is some noble boy who, set about with great temptations, thinks of his father's stake on him, his mother's prayer for him, and keeps his conscience clean.

But why this specialization? The choir invisible! Who are the members of it, if not all those who in any quiet, simple way are doing the day's work, whatever it may be, as well as they know how; who are trying to make life pleasanter and happier for those to whom their lives are naturally bound; who, where they see a wrong or lie, are quick to strike it down, who, where they see a right thing to be done or a true word to be spoken, say, "Here am I: take me."

In this choir invisible there are millions and millions of the immortal dead, some of whom were very near and dear to us when they were with us here, and who now shed, from their new home, infinite tenderness and peace upon our hearts. But we need not, must not, wait until death seals us for its own to seek admission to this glorious choir. Only those who belong to it here and now can ever hope to belong to it when they are dead and gone. May we so live here in our present state that we may live hereafter in the increasing beauty, joy, and goodness of the world, assured full well that

> "So to live is heaven,
> To make undying music in the world,
> Breathing as beauteous order that controls
> With growing sway the growing life of man."
> "This is life to come
> Which martyred men have made more glorious
> For us who strive to follow. May we reach
> That purest heaven, be to other souls
> The cup of strength in some great agony,
> Enkindle generous ardor, feed pure love,
> Beget the smiles that have no cruelty,
> Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
> And in diffusion ever more intense.
> So shall we join the choir invisible
> Whose music is the gladness of the world."

OUR GAINS AND LOSSES.

We hear a great deal about the destructive tendencies and achievements of modern thought. I am not here to controvert the railing accusations which are continually resounding from the pulpit and the religious press. I am obliged to admit that there is a great deal of truth in them. I am not only obliged to, but I am glad to. I am glad that so many things have been destroyed, and that so many more are likely to be in the future. The fact is that, for the most part, in these mournful posturings little or no account is made of the bad things that have gone, under the stress of modern thought, or of the good things that have been nourished by its fostering ray. All the emphasis is placed upon the good things that have gone, or, rather, if you will notice carefully, upon the good things that are going to be taken from us. These Jeremiads are very generally in the future tense. This and that dreadful thing is going to happen. The great name of God is going to be erased from human thought, the great reality this name denotes from our conception of the world. Man is going to be relegated to the level of the brutes. His moral will is going to be resolved into a mere series in the stream of physical causation. The blessed certainty of immortal life is going to be exchanged for the annihilation of a sleep to which no dreams will come.

Now for the present, if you please, we will put all these doleful prophecies to one side. We will come back to them again; but, for the present, we will consider some of the things which can be spoken of in the present tense, some of the bad things to which modern thought has given their quietus, and some of the good things it has brought to light;

for it is only fair that these things should be attended to, even if all the dreadful things that are prophesied are sure to come to pass. Even if they had come already, it would be only fair to consider the good things that have come and the bad things that have gone, and see which way the balance tips — to general good or ill.

First, then, some of the bad things which have slunk away before the light of modern thought. One of them is the doctrine which the New England catechism rendered "In Adam's fall we sinned all." Any one of a dozen catechisms of the Calvinistic churches would answer equally well for a clear statement of this doctrine. Take this for example: "We believe that, by the disobedience of Adam, original sin was diffused through the whole race of man; which is the corruption of the whole nature and an hereditary depravity, by which even infants are polluted in their mother's womb and from which as a root every kind of sin is produced in man; and thus it is so vile and execrable in the sight of God that it is sufficient for the damnation of the human race." Is there anything here that the wide world cannot afford to miss? If such a doctrine is taking leave of us, do we not well to speed the parting guest by every skilful art? You will say, perhaps, that I am reckoning too cheerfully when I speak of it as a thing already gone. Is it not comfortably established in the Westminster Confession, and has not the attempt to make any changes in that Confession so far failed most miserably? So much must be allowed; but do those who refuse most stubbornly to have the doctrine taken from the Confession, or softened or abridged in any manner, preach it from their pulpits in the old time way? We know that they do not. In out of the way corners, where new life and thought have never come, it may still find its superannuated expositors. But the average intelligence, not merely the finest intelligence of the evangelical bodies, has left it far behind. How can we but be glad? If the doctrine were not so monstrous, so hateful, so wicked, it would still be so unutterably silly that to be

well rid of it would be a precious boon. It is one of the most inconceivable things that men, whose intellectual force was equal to the best of any time, could entertain such a ridiculous notion as that the eternal welfare of the human race could hinge upon the eating of a forbidden apple by its "federal head."

Has the doctrine of election any beauty, that we should desire it any more than the doctrine of original sin? It is that, "all things being at God's disposal, he orders all things in such a manner that some men are born devoted to certain death, that his name may be glorified in their destruction. And he does not so devote them because he foresees their wickedness, but he foresees their wickedness because he has devoted them to destruction and decreed their everlasting death." Here, again, you may suggest that I am taking too much for granted; namely, that this doctrine is already a thing of the past. Like the other, it still lingers in the Westminster Confession and in the dull brains of country parsons, superannuated, or side-tracked, while the express of modern thought goes whirling past. I answer as before: The doctrine is nowhere more inaccessible to general use and harm than in the Westminster Confession. It is there as an historic document. Once it was the staple of preaching. Now —

> "Oh, no! we never mention it;
> Its name is never heard."

Another bad thing gone or well upon its way to the destruction it deserves is the doctrine of eternal misery. All except the few elect God passes by for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, and ordains them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, or, rather, for the original sin of Adam. I could read you page after page from the works of Jonathan Edwards, describing the torments of the damned, until you should put your fingers in your ears or cry out for me to stop such blasphemies. God, he says, "will crush you under his feet without mercy. He will crush out your blood, and make it fly. . . . He will not only hate you, but he will have you in

the uttermost contempt. No place shall be thought fit for you but under his feet, to be trodden down as the mire of the streets." On the other hand, "the sight of hell-torments will exalt the happiness of the Saints forever. . . . When they see others who were of the same nature, and born under the same circumstances, plunged into such misery, and they so distinguished, oh, it will make them sensible how happy they are! A sense of the opposite misery, in all cases, greatly increases the relish of any joy or pleasure." Now Jonathan Edwards, the promulgator of these sentiments, is agreed to have been the tallest intellectual giant that America has yet produced. Moreover, he was one of the best of men. As was said of Dr. Nehemiah Adams, he never said a hard word of any one but the Almighty. Yet he could think and say such monstrous things as these. Mind you, I am not pretending that anybody can think or say them now. In books written seventy years ago I find orthodox writers repudiating them with indignation. But there are hundreds and thousands who repudiate them now for one who repudiated them then. So much the better. Surely, there is nothing in such doctrines and beliefs that cannot willingly and joyfully be given up! If, as the doleful prophesy, agnosticism should soon be the only wear, would it not be infinitely preferable to such doctrines and beliefs as these? Would it not be vastly more comfortable and pleasant not to believe in any God at all, nor in any immortality whatever, than in such a God, and such an immortality as we have been catching glimpses of in the actual words of the elaborate creeds and mighty theologians of the past? If anybody could deserve the hell which Edwards so vividly described, it would be the man who would not prefer annihilation to eternal life and happiness on any such terms, his individual bliss contrasting with the infinite woe of those foredoomed from all eternity to endless pain.

Allied to these doctrines that we have considered there are others almost equally intolerable and hideous and depressing; and, if I had time to dwell on them, I could make my

case a great deal stronger than it will be if I pass them by. But pass them by I must if I am going to complete the line of thought on which I have set out. The things named are only a few of the bad things that have disappeared before the face of modern thought; but I must let them stand, and pass to the consideration of some of the good things that modern thought has brought along, and grafted on our modern life. It is certainly a good thing to be able to think one's own thought and express it without subjecting one's self to punishment by the Church or State, to imprisonment or fine, or loss of one's estates or torture or the stake,— all of which things, not very long ago, were the inevitable consequences of men's not believing such things as we have been considering. This kind of good thing is something to which we are now so accustomed that we take it very much for granted as we do the light and air; but, if we could make trial of the other for a little time, we should readily agree, I think, that our religious liberty is really a very good thing. I do not know of anything in my experience that has reconciled me more completely to living in this nineteenth century instead of in the sixteenth or seventeenth than a visit I once made to the torture chamber of Nuremberg, where they show all kinds of things made to torture the life out of people or compel them to say they believed something which they did not believe.

Is it not also a good thing to be excused from believing such dreadful things about God and man and the hereafter as those set forth by the excellent divines of the Westminster Assembly, to be assured that they are not taught in the Bible, and that, if they were, there would be no sufficient reason for believing them? There must always, I am sure, have been a great many people who did not believe them, even if they thought they did. Otherwise, life would have been perfectly intolerable. Somehow, the good God has planted in men's hearts a happy confidence that life, upon the whole, is sound and sweet; and, though the theologians have done much to destroy this confidence, and have succeeded in many in-

stances, in many others, and these a great majority, they have not succeeded. But in our own time reason and knowledge fortify the natural instincts of the heart. Those of us who care to do so can see for ourselves how the great systems of theology grew up, and see that there is nothing sacrosanct about them, that they reflect the customs and the prejudices of particular times, and that, in proportion as their history is known, they are utterly condemned.

Another good thing is the permission which the scholars give us to think of the Bible as a purely human book. The rational mind has driven the theological back on this position from one line of circumvallation to another, but the theological mind has got there finally. Theologians are still busy weaving phrases which are designed to give a different impression; but, if they deceive themselves or others, it will not be for long. Now, to know what a good thing this is, one must know what an enormous waste of intellect there has been in the endeavor to force the meaning of Scripture into conformity with the meaning of science; one must think how much more rapid the advance of science would have been if the Bible had not been used to block its path on every line where it was trying to break through. One cannot say whether the Bible or science has fared worse in the process. But, when the six days of Genesis are put upon the rack, and stretched out into six thousand years or six hundred thousand, we know the violence has been extreme; and we cannot easily exaggerate the good thing that we have in being able to let the Bible say its say and science do the same. If they agree or disagree, no matter.

Is it not another good thing that modern thought has given us, in what we call comparative religion, a science which has obliterated the distinction of true and false between one religion and another, also the distinctions of natural and supernatural, natural and revealed,—a science which finds in all religion the effort of humanity to discover and express its right relation to the universal mystery of life

and death, and which permits us to admire things beautiful and true wherever we discover them, and discovers many in non-Christian sources more beautiful and true than many in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures? Dr. Holmes hailed the Chicago Parliament of Religions as the longest stride toward the millennium that he had ever seen. It was no stride at all. It was the dramatic incident of a process which began here in America, some fifty years ago, with Lydia Maria Child's "Progress of Religious Ideas," and ever since has been "inching along, like a poor inch-worm," Samuel Johnson, James Freeman Clarke, and Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson having done more to hasten it than any others.

But only a few of the good things that modern thought has brought along have a direct bearing on theology, though some of them, which have no such bearing, have a direct or indirect bearing on religion of first-rate importance. Thus it has made for us a new heaven and a new earth,— the new heaven of the telescope and spectroscope, the new earth of geology and the microscope and chemical analysis, and so on. The good things are innumerable that modern thought has brought to us along these lines,— the larger world, yet not so much larger as more wonderful; the earth a speck compared with the majestic sun and mightier stars, gaining a thousand times as much in absolute as it has lost in relative significance. And these good things, mind you, are not only for our imagination and our awe and wonder and delight. Hundreds of them are for our practical convenience. Even where this was least in the discoverer's mind, it has been most obvious in the result, as in Faraday's electrical experiments. The men of pure science have labored; and the men of practical invention have entered into their labors, and given us such good things as the locomotive and the power-loom and the printing-press, the electric telegraph, the electric light, the telephone,— things multiplying infinitely the conveniences and pleasures of our lives. Years ago it was estimated that machinery in England had multiplied

the working force of England by two hundred. What it has since done I do not know. There have no doubt been many painful incidents — are still — of the prodigious change. But take the average condition, and the industrious common laborer to-day is better housed and clothed and fed, and can see more things worth seeing and enjoy more things worth enjoying, than could a noble or a king five or six centuries ago, when those fine people threw their bones into the foul and rotten straw about the table for their dogs to crunch.

So, then, am I not right in saying that, even if the flood of modern thought had swept away some dear and precious things, some of the most dear and precious,— God and immortality, and moral responsibility, and the old certainty of an infallible revelation (I put together things of most unequal worth, falling in for the time being with the current of the popular Jeremiad),— even if the flood of modern thought had, I say, swept away these dear and precious things, we are bound to recognize that, as it has done so, it has brought along and left with us good and great things innumerable, in heaven and on earth,— things that have made a better heaven *here* for thousands than the old-time theologians dreamed of *there* in their most satisfying dreams.

But suppose the worst things prophesied by our modern Jeremiahs were upon us, and that not only the almighty devil of Calvin and Edwards had departed, and taken with him the intolerable immortality which they conceived,— heaven for the elect, a mere corporal's guard, and hell for all the rest,— and a humanity utterly corrupt, even the little children, as Edwards said, "vipers, and infinitely worse than vipers,"— suppose, I say, that not only these bad things were gone, but also the good God which the heretics have proclaimed in the place of and in spite of the almighty devil, and the good immortality for all, and the humanity which is born free, and can choose the right; for many are the melancholy voices prophesying that these things are

what we must expect, and that not far off their awful coming glooms.

Well, even if these voices prophesy things sure and true, we are in honor bound to recognize what bad things have been diminished and destroyed, what good things have been nourished by the stress of modern thought,— in honor bound to strike an average, and ask whether, even without the good God and the blessed immortality and free-born humanity, we are not better off than we were under the old régime. Better no God, no immortality, no moral freedom, than such a God and such an immortality — ninety-nine parts hell and one part heaven — and such a god-accursed and hell-deserving creature as the man evolved from Calvin's monstrous brain. For it is not as if all of our good things were those assured us by the grace of modern thought. These are, indeed, great and wonderful; but we have things not given to us by modern thought, and which it cannot take away,— things that are sure, and are not likely to be made any less so by the course of thought in days to come, whatever it may be. Things that are sure! Whatever the philosophers and theologians and scientists may yet produce, here is the blue sky over us, a roof majestical, fretted each night with countless golden fires; here is this lovely earth around us and beneath our feet, its grass so green, its trees so fresh and strong, its streams so pure and bright, its mountains so sublime, its hills so fair, its ocean-tides so glorious in their mass and sweep, its beauteous alternation of the days and nights, the sunrise and the sunset clouds so wonderful. And, then, the seasonal change,— the spring-time, the refulgent summer, the autumn's bounty, and the white samite gown which winter wears, expressing more of beauty than it hides. Here are the flowers, the punctual flowers, however we may theorize about them,— here they are with their ineffable beauty. And here we are ourselves among these things; and whatever the process of our coming, by God's grace or some other, we are what we are,— our bodies the most beautiful of all things under the heaven's cope, our minds search-

ing the universe, our hearts thrilling with love, our consciences impelling us to do what we think right, however hard. These things are sure, and more than these. However good or ill the world, we can do much to better it. We can lift up the hands that hang down and confirm the feeble knees. We can heal the sick, and comfort those who mourn. We can share our bounty with the less fortunate. We can strike down the oppressor, and lift up his victim from the dust. We can cherish the beautiful things which men have added to the natural store,— the beautiful thoughts of the great poets and masters of imaginative truth, the sacred memories of earnest and heroic souls, the famous ones of history and those whom we ourselves have known, worthy to sit at feast with them in the Valhalla of our reverence and praise. These things are sure. We do not hold them at the beck of the philosopher and scientist. These have we in perpetuity; and, when we think of all the bad things gone, and all the good things that have come in with the tide of modern thought, surely, we are not in any dreadful case, even supposing that the worst which has been prophesied should shortly come to pass. And why? Because life is more than any theory of life. Because man is more than any theory of man. Because God is more than any theory of God.

> "The gods man makes he breaks; proclaims them each
> Immortal, and himself outlives them all:
> But whom he set not up he cannot reach
> To shake his cloud-dark, sun-bright pedestal."

But it is only for the purposes of an argument *a fortiori* that I have said, Suppose the worst things prophesied by our modern Jeremiahs were upon us, and that the good God and the good immortality must follow the God of infinite cruelty and the intolerable immortality into the abyss of intellectual nonentity. I have only said, "Suppose these things," in order that I might go on to say that, even so, we should have *life as it is*, and all the things that modern

thought and science have added to the natural store, and that with such boundless wealth we are by no means poor, even if agnosticism is bound to be the outcome of our theology, and a necessarianism destructive of the freedom of the will the outcome of our anthropology. But I do not for a moment make the definite concession that such an outcome actually impends. Not only will the eternal God abide, but the conviction of his life and power and presence will not only survive, but it will immeasurably increase from year to year,— from generation to generation. "Will the Son of Man at his coming find faith on the earth?" More now than fifty years ago,— more faith in God, more faith in immortality. If men do not still say "God," it is because none of the old names seem large enough to signify the infinite life in which we live and move and have our being. Quite recently I have been reading Cædmon's "Fall of Man," an old poem written twelve hundred years ago; and there are pictures illustrative of the text. There is one of the Almighty "sitting on the circle of the earth," or, rather, on the empyrean. I wish that I could throw it on a screen for you to see it, too. It was a picture which satisfied men's thought of God in those old times. Multiply it by a hundred million, and it would not satisfy us now. For our God is *in* the universe, working through every part of it, and, if transcendent of its material bounds, not so as a mere architect, but so as the all-comprehending ether round each separate star.

As with our thought of God, so with our thought of immortality. We may not say that we are sure of this. We may be more modest, and "speak softly to each other of a hope." But we have a thousand times as much ground for saying "We are sure" as had our fathers in the faith. They had one solitary, ill-attested, and incredible event. We have the longings of innumerable hearts, the mind's unsatisfied desires, the soul's unrealized ideals. We have many scientific intimations,— the persistence of force, the survival of the fittest, the correlation of growth. Many of you know more than I do of modern Spiritualism; but I know enough

of it to know that its evidence for a future life is a thousand times, ten thousand times, as strong as that furnished by the reputed resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Indeed, if you will notice, modern Spiritualism is not infrequently the silent major premise upon which the argument from the resurrection of Jesus depends for all its force.

As for the doleful prophecy that the freedom of man's will is to be crushed beneath the weight of philosophical and physical causation, it has a comic sound, when we consider that no system of philosophy or science has ever been more nugatory of the freedom of the will than John Calvin's doctrine of the divine decrees. It is to the heretics that we are indebted for the gospel of man's moral freedom. If now the scientific are about to re-establish the doctrine of his physical or metaphysical bondage, we shall be no worse off than we were before. But what we are actually tending to is a doctrine which at once recognizes the limitations of organization and environment and the possible acquisition of self-mastery. And, if the proportions of these factors of the will are such that there is less call for blame and more for pity than there was formerly, the change is one that does not call for our regret. It means that much which we have heretofore treated as sin must henceforth be treated as disease, and that for the vindictive methods of our penal legislation we must substitute the kindness which may ameliorate the moral sickness which it cannot cure.

And hence, all things considered, the bad things that have gone, the good things that have come to stay, and those that evermore abide, *life as it is in perpetuity*, and the persuasion that our bearers of ill-tidings run before they have been sent, and say what is not true,—considering all these things, I cannot find that we have any reason to be cast down or seriously troubled. Making the best of *life as it is*, whatever the theoretical interpretation of the good things that have displaced the bad, and the hopes we may legitimately cherish in the full blaze of modern science and philosophy, I dare believe that never since the world began

have men and women had better reason and authority for facing the future with a cheerful countenance and an unclouded heart.

"I tremble, not with terror, but with hope,
As the great day reveals its coming scope:
Never in earlier days, our hearts to cheer,
Have such bright gifts of heaven been brought so near;
Nor ever has been kept the aspiring soul
By space so narrow from so grand a goal."

THE WANDERING JEW.

THE story of the wandering Jew has taken many forms, and attracted to it the genius of many poets and romancers; many artists, too, the best known among these being Gustave Doré, whose predilection for the horrible found here a subject which it could indefinitely batten on without beginning to exhaust its possibilities. In its simplest and most striking form the story runs, that Jesus, on the way to Calvary, overcome with the weight of the cross he carried, begged of the Jew, Ahasuerus, that he might sit upon his door-stone for a moment to gather up his failing strength. But the Jew refused his prayer with curses, and drove him back upon the tender mercies of the Roman guard. Whereupon Jesus said to him, "Thou shalt wander on the earth till I return." Struck with astonishment, the Jew was for some moments as one dazed; and, when he came to himself, the street was empty, and straightway his wanderings began. And still he wanders on, longing for peace and rest, desiring death, but all in vain.

The animus of the story is not hidden or remote. It is evidently one more expression of the truly Christian hatred of the Jewish people,— a hatred whose incidents have been the most outrageous disabilities that one race or class has ever imposed upon another, the most horrible persecutions and expatriations ever known, those of the Russian Jews in our own time being amenities and benedictions in comparison with those five centuries back, which were religious in their inspiration, while those of our own time are economical and social. And the hatred which economical and social antipathies engender is mild, is sweet, is al-

together lovely in comparison with that which is engendered by the antipathies of religion.

It is merely an expansion of the original idea of the Wandering Jew that finds in him a type of the Jewish race, so long a wanderer upon the earth that it may easily be conceived that it will go on wandering —

> "Till the sun is cold
> And the stars are old
> And the leaves of the judgment book unfold."

The wanderings of the Jewish people have very generally been regarded by their Christian friends as a sign of God's wrath against them for their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah, the sins of the fathers being visited upon the children not only to the third and fourth, but to the thirtieth and fortieth generation. It may seem to lend a certain confirmation to this view that the Jews have not been a wandering people except as other people — presumably the instruments of God — have made them so,— Persians, Babylonians, Romans, Spaniards, English, Russians, and so on. There has been no principle of restlessness in the race, no survival of their original nomadic, migratory habit. They have shown a singular aptitude for settling down almost anywhere, and making themselves at home. But there is one point of strong resemblance between the wanderer of the legend and the wandering race, and that is the indestructibility of each in turn. The Wandering Jew of the legend is envious above all things of "happy men who have the power to die,"— a power which he has not. The circumstance is an admirable suggestion of the indestructible vitality of the Jewish race. Certainly, if it *could* have perished, it would have done so long ago. That it has withstood the enormous and infernal cruelty to which it has been subjected is proof of something in the bone and sinew of the race of most irrefragable strength. Only a people of the greatest vigor and persistency could have held its own against such fearful odds. Here was a tree with something in the grain which

broke the axes in their hands who said: "Cut it down! Why cumbereth it the ground?"

The blood of the martyrs may be the seed of the Church; but it is certainly the seed of other things as well,— some of them of doubtful quality. The sordid, grasping, money-getting temper, which the modern mind associates with the Jew, is evidently the product of those conditions of isolation and contempt which have so long environed him.

"Foxes are so cunning, because they are not strong."

The social weakness of the Jew has set him to work developing an armature of golden scales. His disabilities have obliged him, like Becky Sharp in Thackeray's "Vanity Fair," to be his own mamma,— to look out for number one, to have an eye for the main chance. Then the good Christians, having done their best to make the Jew after this pattern, turn round, and curse him for the aptness and the accuracy with which he has learned the lesson so industriously taught.

The legend of the Wandering Jew has another and much deeper suggestion for us in the words addressed by Jesus to Ahasuerus: "Thou shalt wander on the earth till I return." For, if Jesus *could* return, if the spirit which was in Jesus could spring up again and dominate the Christian Church, then would the wanderings of the Jewish people cease, then there would be an end of their persecutions and their disabilities. For his was the spirit of humanity, and there is no agreement between the spirit of humanity and such a spirit of intolerance and hatred as has marked, and still marks, the Christian's treatment of the Jew. Can you not discern the signs of the times? One of them is that Jesus is coming again, that all those who have thrust him aside and usurped his place, the gods, the demi-gods, the beings neither gods nor men, the supernatural monstrosities, are being sent into retirement and obscurity, and that the man of Nazareth, the son of Joseph the carpenter, the Galilean peasant, the Galilean teacher, is coming again into men's

thought, into their hearts, into their social aspirations. The herald who announces him is the scientific critic of the New Testament and the Christian origins.

This scientific critic assures us that Jesus was a Jew, not only in his birth and state, but in his opinions, his convictions, his religion. He assures us that Jesus did not teach any new doctrines, and that there was no reason why his followers should not remain Jews in their religious belief. As for the doctrines called Christian, which have been the bulk of Christian preaching and teaching, he knew nothing about these,— he was not responsible for them,— trinity, atonement, election, predestination, and so on. The Jews, whom Christians have so hated and so persecuted for rejecting Jesus, have been much nearer to his thought and life than their persecutors. It is these who have rejected him, these who have ever crucified his simple truth afresh, these who have buried him as under piled mountains beneath the crushing weight of their dogmas, so that, where he conceived God as a heavenly Father, "the orthodox idea of God is the most horrible idea that it is possible for the imagination to cenceive." But now, perhaps, you think that I am dealing in exaggeration. But those are not my words. They are the words of Dr. Momerie, an accredited preacher and teacher of the Established Church of England, whom some of you, perhaps, were privileged, as I was not, to hear, at the great Parliament of Religions in Chicago, where he was one of many shining lights.

It is one thing for Jesus to come again in criticism, and another thing for him to come again in the popular imagination, even in the preaching of those who know perfectly well that the pillared firmament of their traditional theology is rottenness, and its base built on stubble. But come he soon or late, believe me, he will surely come. The type of heretic asking, "How can I manage to stay in?" will be succeeded by the type of heretic asking, "Must I not straightway go out if I would be an honest man?" And the second type will gain upon the first; and Jesus, so long despoiled of his sweet

human glory, and tricked out in supernatural finery, will walk the earth again in the simplicity and grandeur of that habitude and speech which drew men to him from the lake shores and country sides of Galilee eighteen centuries ago.

And thus, almost before I meant it, I am brought to the central idea of my discourse: that the Wandering Jew finds his best representative in Christian history in Jesus himself. I can claim no originality for this conception.

It is so natural that it seems almost inevitable. There is even a very positive suggestion of it in that New Testament passage where we read, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has not where to lay his head,"— words which you may, if you like, take for the text of my discourse. The wonder, then, is not that Mr. Robert Buchanan has made the Wandering Jew the subject of an elaborate poem, identifying him with Jesus. The wonder is that he should be the first, if he *was* that, to make a poem on these lines. But I trust there will yet come a poet who will do this in some better fashion than that of Mr. Buchanan's grim and ghastly poem. He may, however, tarry long upon his way; and in the mean time we may be able for ourselves to draw out from our identification of Jesus with the Wandering Jew something of genuine significance, a fruitful and inspiring thought.

Jesus, the Wandering *Jew!* Just for a moment let us emphasize the substantive before addressing ourselves to the adjective with exclusive interest. The little boy who went home from Sunday-school quite distracted because his teacher had told him that Jesus was a Jew,— how could that be, he asked, when Jesus was God, and God was a Presbyterian? — this little boy needed instruction hardly less than does the average preacher of our time, so remote from his intelligence, as from that of the average Christian all the ages down, is the idea that Jesus was a Jew,— born a Jew, educated a Jew, feeding his heart upon the Jewish law and prophecies and psalms. All this upon the human side, even though, on the other, he was very God of very God, and,

from the standpoint of the modern critic, a Jew in the confinement of the circle of his vision and his hope to the small Jewish world, and teaching a religion Jewish in all its explicit doctrines, and its deepest implications, which became universal only as it lost its primitive simplicity and invested his personality with the magnificent but deceptive attributes of the Greek theology. Of course, it was not possible for the mediæval Christian to appreciate this modern standpoint; but, if he could only have taken to heart so much of it as was correlated with the traditional view, how many cruelties would have been abated, how many persecutions would have never been! For how should not the people whom the young prophet loved so much ever appeal to what was kindliest in the hearts of those who were his professed disciples?

Jesus, the *Wandering* Jew! "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has not where to lay his head." Is there a single prophecy of the Old Testament which is applied to Jesus in the New with anything approaching to the veritable fulfilment that the Christian centuries have furnished this? I do not know of one. "No room in the inn!" So says the legend of the infancy, and so it was to be with Jesus as he came wandering down the centuries. No room for him in that costly structure which the philosophy of Alexandria raised to heaven in his name,— a structure which, like the cathedrals of the Middle Ages, was the growth of centuries, and which, at each fresh remove from the lifetime of Jesus, was a more splendid mockery of what he actually was and taught and did while he was living upon earth. For, if any man of sound intelligence could forget all that has been written about Jesus and about Christianity, and come face to face with the four Gospels (yes, *the four Gospels*, and not the three synoptics only), what do you think would be the conception of Jesus that would be impressed upon his mind? Would it not be that here was a man who cared very little for theology, very little for belief, very little for forms and ceremonies, and a great deal for character, for conduct, for life;

a man with such a simple, natural trust in God that he always spoke of him as "my Father" and "our Father," and "your Father"; a man who loved the open face of nature and the homeliness of human life, in whose speech all common and domestic things turned into parable and picture, as in Shakspere's speech they turned into poetry and song; a man who loved little children, and made their simplicity the symbol of the heavenly kingdom which he said was coming upon earth; a man who loved every fellow-creature, and especially those who had most need of love,— the sorrowing and sinful folk, the miserable and forlorn; a man whose constant plea was for an inward righteousness, a religion of the heart, a spiritual devotion to the ends of righteousness and truth and love? I do not say that these things are all our man of sound intelligence would find. He might find something different from these, and even conflicting with them; but he would find these so paramount, so omnipresent, that they would dwarf everything else, abolish it, as does the head-light of a locomotive everything except itself.

Now it is a very interesting fact that this impression of the man Jesus, as it strikes upon the eye and heart of the average man of sound intelligence, is the same impression that is made upon the critical scholar coming to the New Testament, and the life of Jesus there, with all the appliances of his difficult and noble art, but with this difference, — that those different and conflicting things which somewhat disturb the vision of the average man are for the critical scholar resolved into the accretions of a time subsequent to that of Jesus. One layer after another of these is stripped away; and at length Jesus, as he actually was, is unmistakably revealed,— a man among men, as "human at the red-ripe of the heart" as any man whose blessed feet have trod the thorny acres of the world; a man whose tender trust in God, the heavenly Father, was only equalled by his passionate tenderness for men and women, not in some high and mighty abstract, theoretic way, but as they appealed to him

in the towns and villages of Galilee, with all their miseries, and shames, and sins.

And now, leaving the New Testament, go with me to the Nicene Creed or the Athanasian, or the Institutes of Calvin, or the Westminster Confession, or the Thirty-nine Articles, and see if every one of these does not cry out, "What have we to do with thee?" upon the man of Nazareth as he is revealed, both to the critical scholar and to the average man of sound intelligence who can dispossess himself of the enormous bias which the "vast and splendid disfigurement" of theological Christianity exerts upon the Christian mind. Do not imagine that I am speaking with the preacher's customary looseness and exaggeration. Dr. Edwin Hatch's "Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church" is one of the most admirable studies of the early transformations of Christianity that has yet been made; and the first words of the first chapter are: "It is impossible for any one, whether he be a student of history or no, to fail to notice a difference of both form and content between the Sermon on the Mount and the Nicene Creed. The Sermon on the Mount is the promulgation of a new law of conduct: . . . metaphysics are wholly absent. The Nicene Creed is a statement partly of historic facts and partly of historic inferences. The metaphysical terms which it contains would probably [I should say, certainly] have been unintelligible to the first disciples: ethics have no place in it." That is the crowning fact,—a statement of Christianity supposed to be absolutely perfect and complete, and *ethics have no place in it.* But I have read to you this morning some passages from the Sermon on the Mount; and I can best bring this matter home to you by reading to you the Nicene Creed as it was originally adopted at Nicæa,* and allowing you to judge for yourselves how much they are alike: "We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things both visible and invisible, and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the

* It was subsequently much amended, both by subtraction and addition, some of which I have indicated by Italics. The most careful scholars cannot tell us when or where.

Father, *only begotten*, that is to say, *of the substance of the Father, God of God*, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father by whom all things were made, *both things in heaven and things on earth*,— who for us men and for our salvation came down and was made flesh, and was made man, suffered and rose again on the third day, and went up into the heavens, and is to come again to judge the quick and dead; and in the Holy Ghost. But those that say, 'there was when He was not,' and 'before He was begotten He was not,' and 'He came into existence from what was not,' or who profess that the Son of God is of a different substance or person or that He is created or changeable or variable, are anathematized by the Catholic Church." No room in the inn! No room in such an hostelry as this for the Wandering Jew of the beatitudes and warnings of the Sermon on the Mount! Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head in such a scheme as this. In every line, in every phrase, it cries out upon him, "What have we to do with thee?" You have gone up from some happy valley where there was growing grass and corn, where there were trees and flowers and children playing in and out among them, where there was lazy smoke of household fires, where there were wives and mothers waiting for their good men to come home to the enjoyment of the frugal meal. You have gone up from all this into some mountain's top, where they had promised you a glorious view; and there you have been wrapped in whirling mists, and lost your way, and wandered hopelessly, chilled to the marrow of your bones. Just such a difference as that between such a valley and such a mountain top I find between the New Testament morality and the Nicene theology.

And I find a difference no less striking between the New Testament Jesus, with or without the illumination of critical science, and the stupendous formalism of the Roman Catholic Church, and the stupendous dogmatism of Geneva,

reaching its most intolerable development in the Westminster Confession. The Nicene Creed has seemed to us as far as possible from the simplicity of Jesus. But it is heart of his heart compared with the Westminster theology. It is of this that the English Churchman, whom I have already quoted, says that Paganism had nothing viler than its doctrine of the atonement, nothing so vile as its doctrine of predestination, and that its God is the most horrible being which it is possible for the imagination to conceive. These are strong words; but I cannot see that they are a whit too strong to state the unvarnished facts. And yet I know that there are men as good and true as any men alive who think, or think they think, that the Westminster Confession is the ark of God, on which we may not dare to lay destructive or irreverent hands.

Jesus, the wandering Jew, and nowhere else rejected with such scorn, nowhere else so homeless, as in those doctrinal and ceremonial developments which have been more conspicuously characteristic of Christianity in its historical development than anything else. No room for him in the portentous theological statements; in the tawdry splendor of ecclesiastical disfigurement, no place for him to lay his head!

And, if this were the whole story of the relation of Jesus to the Christian centuries, it would be miserably sad. It *is* miserably sad, even as a part of the whole story. But it is only a part; and there is another part that is full of encouragement and strength and peace. There was no room in the inn for Mary and her child, in the dear lovely legend that is worth a thousand ordinary facts and figures that are indubitably true. But there was room in the stable, in the oxen's stall,— the manger where the oxen fed, a cradle for the marvellous child.

There is a sign and symbol here of what has been true of Jesus in his relation to the Christian centuries. His essential spirit of undogmatic, unceremonial religion has indeed wandered wide and long; and it has been spurned away by those who have been boldest in their claims on his authority.

But, if there has been no room for him in the inn, there has been room for him in the stable. If the proud and boastful theologians and ecclesiastics have cried out upon him, "What have we to do with thee?" there have been doors flung wide to him; and homeless hearts have made a home for him as pure and sweet as that which, when he was child embosomed him, on Nazareth's hillside street. Thousands and millions have found room for him, and to spare, because all of these have apprehended religion as he apprehended it, as simple trust in God and love toward men, as mercy and compassion, as loving most where there was most need of love, as striving for an inward purity of desire and thought, contented with no mere conformity to an external law. And not only so; but many thousands, millions, who have not apprehended religion in this simple way, in spite of their belief that without certain forms and doctrines no man could be saved, have shown forth that heavenward trust, that manward love, that inward purity, which, wherever they are shown, are a right hearty welcome for the essential spirit of Jesus to come in and make itself at home.

I do not know — who does?— how much of this simplicity of religion has been inspired directly or indirectly by the spirit of Jesus wandering through the world. Sometimes it seems as if it must be very little, his spirit has been so over borne by hostile elements. But, if the Church has had her proud ecclesiastics, she has also had her humble pastors and teachers. If she has had her Babel-building theologians, she has also had her simple and great-hearted men and women, who have made "the sweet reasonableness of Jesus" their possession, and his secret theirs. But it would have gone hard with the wandering Jesus if his only welcome among men had been that for which his own spirit had prepared the way; if thousands upon thousands had not, simply because they were men and women, living in God's world, found the same reason and authority for believing the religion of Jesus as he found,— the witness of their own honest minds and loving hearts.

In the legend of the Wandering Jew, it is the climax of his misery that he cannot die. In the parable of the Wandering Jesus, it is his deathlessness that glorifies his name, and is the peace and comfort of our hearts. That the ecclesiastics and the theologians have not been able with all their selfish or mistaken zeal to crush out the spirit of Jesus is the most splendid testimony that we have to its imperishable vitality. If it has survived so long and in spite of so much blind or wilful opposition, why should we doubt that it will survive for centuries and ages of the coming time, or that it will have in them a more unimpeded course and a more glorious triumph than it has yet had at any time since first it started on its endless way?

> "His living word sprang from the heart of Man,
> Eternal word of love and liberty.
> Fearless he gave it to the winds again:
> 'Twas manhood's native tongue, and could not die.
> To his dear brotherhood life's pulses leap,
> And wakening ages answer deep to deep."

THE CHARACTER OF JESUS.

In old New England times the preparatory lecture, as they called it, was a feature of commanding interest in both ecclesiastical and social life, which in those times were almost, if not altogether, one. It was preparatory of the celebration of the Lord's Supper on the Sunday following. My sermon of this morning is a kind of preparatory lecture, preparatory of the coming Christmas festival, the tendency of which is to be exclusively an affair of personal kindness, in which the personality of Jesus counts for very little, notwithstanding much ado about the legends of his birth and infancy. But, when we celebrate the birthday of any other man of great renown, we habitually address ourselves to a consideration of his character. By so doing we imagine that we can best do honor to his memory, and get strength from his example. If, then, we have welcomed Jesus back from his long exile, in some supernatural sphere, to the warm precincts of our human life, there seems no good reason why we should not accord to him the treatment we accord to others; no good reason why we should not celebrate his birthday, or the day traditionally fixed as such, by a consideration of his character, with a view to making it as serviceable as possible to the edification of our own characters and our self-encouragement in every good word and work.

There is nothing to surprise us in the fact that the character of Jesus has not heretofore, and especially in those churches which are called orthodox, been a favorite theme at Christmas or at any other time. Strictly speaking, Jesus has had no character for the traditional theology, for character is that which differentiates man from man; and, if

Jesus was something other than a man, a normal human being, then to speak of his character is somewhat beside the mark. Even if this were not so, so much strength has gone to the discussion of his nature, or to the discussion of his offices and work, that little has been left for the discussion or the apprehension of those intellectual and moral traits which make up the sum of character.

Our older Unitarianism and our newer Orthodoxy occupy almost precisely the same ground. There are passages in our Unitarian sermons of fifty years ago that would fit so nicely into Dr. Abbott's, and others such as his, that you could not find the seam. Nothing is easier than for these theological liberals to say that they are not Unitarians when the charge of being such is brought against them. They are not Unitarians after the manner of Channing's earlier preaching. Their theology is a more advanced theology than his: their Jesus is a much more human being than was his pre-existent Christ. They are not Unitarians after the manner of the frankest of our later Unitarians, who are prepared to accept not only the main proposition that Jesus was a human being, but all the corollaries inherent in that proposition. But they *are* Unitarians after the manner of such Unitarianism as that which was dominant among Unitarians some fifty years ago,— a Unitarianism whose passwords were that Jesus was a perfect man, the ideal man, the perfect revelation of God in perfect man, all of which terms, I am obliged to feel, imply a certain lack of intellectual seriousness, a failure to apply the mind closely and severely to the facts in hand, to the end of seeing just what they import, and are merely an ingenious endeavor to make out of them something bearing a resemblance more or less remote to the things which have been done away.

It is simply fatal to any lucid apprehension of the character of Jesus to pronounce him at the outset a perfect man or the ideal man. Could we prove either of these propositions, we should still be far enough from establishing a doctrine of his unique divinity, and much farther from iden-

tifying him with the almighty and the everlasting God. But how can we prove either of these propositions? Dr. Gordon's way is this: Given the fact of individuality, and one man may have been better than any other man. We shall all agree to that. And, that man may have been Jesus. We shall all agree to that. But how pass from this may-have-been to what actually was? Goodness is so much a matter of the inner life that only the divine omniscience could make that perilous passage. And, if we could make it, we should only have determined that Jesus was the best of men, not that he was a perfect man. If he was that, then the best man before his time was perfect; and all the way along the centuries back of him the best man at any time was perfect, and so we have a goodly number of perfect men. And if a perfect man, as Dr. Gordon claims, is a unique divinity, is God, then we have a whole pantheon of unique divinities, of gods. Then we have polytheism back again. But, if the passage from the possible superiority of Jesus to his actual superiority is a difficult one, a much more difficult one is that from his unique superiority to his unique divinity, his deity. The fault may be in me; but I must confess that the verbal artifices by which this passage is attempted impress me as a kind of intellectual thimble-rigging, as words without any real meaning. Any amount of moral superiority on the part of Jesus would not, as Dr. Gordon himself admits, detach him from humanity; and by that sign it would not identify him in any absolutely peculiar way with the eternal God. And let me say just here that, while many excellent people who are enmeshed in the traditional theology are sincerely grieved at what seems to them some derogation from the splendor of Jesus by our Unitarian thought, I wish that they could see how irrational, how irreverent, how really blasphemous, it seems to us to elevate the most perfect man imaginable into identity or unique community with the eternal Source of everything that is. They cannot imagine how we shudder at such gross impiety. This, also, I would say,— that all of these attempts to assign to Jesus a

mathematical superiority to all other men are mere feats of intellectual athletics: they have no ethical or spiritual significance. I hate them all. Better, far better, is it to think and speak of Jesus as one of the best of men, one of the greatest helpers of mankind, than to brand him arbitrarily with a mechanical superiority which can have no intellectual reality. Those who prefer to use language with a certain rhetorical looseness may speak of him as the perfect man, the ideal man, always prepared to say they did not mean anything definite when they are brought to book. In many a Unitarian church there sits some nice old Cerberus who likes to have his minister throw him these little sops. But the better way is to bring one's language into the closest possible conformity with one's thought, however Cerberus may bark.

Within the limits of such conceptions of Jesus as are denoted by the phrases "perfect man" and "ideal man," it is almost as impossible to speak rationally and distinctly of his character as it is while regarding him as the Second Person in the Trinity. In either case, you have a monochromatic wash, when what you want is a palette of the most various colors. You have men considering what constitutes moral perfection and what constitutes the ideal man, and then substituting their conceptions for Jesus in a wholesale manner. You have a Jesus evolved from their inner consciousness, and not from the New Testament. And it is from the New Testament that we must evolve him if we are going to have any warrantable conception of his character.

Not that the New Testament can be taken at its face value in such an enterprise as that in which we are engaged. Within its narrow limits the process of idealization has begun already, and has gone a long way in the direction of that culmination which was witnessed at the Council of Nicæa in 325 A.D. We must get at the bottom facts as far as possible. We must distinguish as far as may be the accretions of a century from the actual sayings of Jesus and the

actual facts of his career. Some of you lately have been conversant with a great hullabaloo that has been made over certain criticisms that have been made by the great German scholar Harnack on the New Testament books, carrying them back in some instances a little further than they had been carried by some others. Thus, they assure us, the credibility of the gospel narratives is assured. So much the worse for them and for Jesus, if it be so. There are certain teachings ascribed to Jesus in the New Testament which Martineau and others have allowed themselves to credit to a progressive misconception. If they must be credited to Jesus, he is a loser, not a gainer, by the criticism which implies that they must be so credited. Was never, then, rejoicing more misplaced than that which has resounded over the discoveries of Harnack and their imaginary implications.

Certainty, in regard to any New Testament fact or teaching, we cannot possibly attain. "The best in this kind are but shadows"; but they are shadows which rudely give the shape of a reality which is unspeakably impressive, beautiful, and precious to the mind and heart which welcomes everything that makes for the idealization and encouragement of our mortal life. Doing our best to separate the real from the unreal, what are some of the traits which cohere in the character of Jesus, and make him for our imagination a consistent personality, and for our hearts a man to love and honor and admire with passionate sincerity?

Of that physical character which sometimes bodies forth the spiritual man with wonderful fidelity, and sometimes hides him as a veil or mask, we know and can know nothing. Not long before his death the Hon. Thurlow Weed made the pious discovery of an elaborate description of Jesus. But it proved to be something that had been long known and long exploded; a comparatively late production, extremely sentimental, with hardly less the character of the dime novel than the interview of Jesus and Pilate, which a New York journal furnished its readers a few weeks ago as a remarkable find.

One of our oldest representations of Jesus is in an Egyptian tomb; and it is radically different from that commonly accepted, the typical Christ face, through all its variations substantially the same. This type would seem to have been early fixed; and it is plausibly contended that its original was some bust of Plato, so that all the centuries down the Galilean teacher has been impersonating — which literally means masking — as the Greek philosopher. Jesus himself shaped his Messianic ideal to a very great extent upon the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah: "Who hath believed our report," etc. And consequently it is not strange that the personal description of that chapter was applied to him by many of the early Christians, those in particular whose asceticism inclined them favorably to everything to which they were not naturally inclined. The personal description in fifty-third Isaiah is, "He hath no form nor comeliness; no beauty that we should desire him." There is not the slightest reason for supposing that this description applied to Jesus. As to what his appearance actually was we have the dictum of Renan for our best guide: "In the absence of all knowledge we are permitted to think as we please." The most of us will think something different from the typical representation, — which at its best, however, as in Thorwaldsen's bust, — is very beautiful. But it is not strong enough. Jesus was no such weakling as the painters and the poets and the novelists have represented him. If he had been, they would never have represented him. They would never have heard of him. A Jesus as lackadaisical as that of Gen. Wallace's "Ben-Hur" would have sunk at once and forever into the slimy ooze of his own abounding inefficiency, and been never heard of more.

Of the intellectual character of Jesus we are much better informed than of the physical. We can judge of that by the main tenor of his teachings, when every allowance has been made for what is obviously the accretion of times subsequent to his. Of his intellectual character little has heretofore been made, and naturally enough, because "the mind of

Christ" has been supposed to be the mind of the Almighty, and consequently too exalted to be brought into comparison with minds purely natural and human. It would be absurd to think any of the intellectual traits attributed to Jesus in the New Testament remarkable as inhering in the divine omniscience. Even for the liberal thinker he has generally been too much "a thing enskied and sainted" to be seriously considered from an intellectual point of view. And yet I am quite sure that an analysis as keen as that which our best critics bring to bear on their contemporaries or other persons of great eminence would result in the exhibition of an intellectual character profoundly interesting, and deserving of our warmest admiration. I am not at all inclined to that estimate of Jesus which depreciates his intellectual character in comparison with his conscience and his heart. For one thing, he was Shaksperean in his vital apprehension and appropriation of the concrete elements of the life, both static and dynamic, in the midst of which his own personal life transpired. Nothing is more remarkable in Shakspere than his responsiveness to the world about him. He saw everything that was going on. His mind was like a sensitive plate to the impression of the objects and the people of his world and the doings that were taking place about him. I dare believe that it was so with Jesus in a hardly less degree. When you consider how brief the Gospels are in comparison with Shakspere's seven-and-thirty plays, it is delightful and it is wonderful to see how much they report of the town and country life of Palestine in the first years of the Christian era. Think of these things for yourselves, and judge if they are not so. Think how the homely, every-day life of the neighbors and the friends of Jesus reappears in his parables, with all its happenings. We think of him as living an interior life,— and he did that,— but at the same time he was objective to a high degree; an idealist, certainly, but a realist no less,— a realist who saw the beautiful and pleasant side of life, and not merely its seamy side, its hideous wounds and sores.

Closely allied with this power of vital apprehension was his creative imagination. Surely, his various parables are miracles of intellectual beauty, whatever be their moral and religious worth. To know how beautiful they are in their simplicity, you have only to turn from them to the paraphrases that have been made of them in prose and verse from time to time. But, indeed, this is so of the New Testament narrative in its entirety, compared with the expansions of the novelists. Read in the New Testament the story of the baptism of Jesus. It says there, "He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and coming upon him." Turn now, and see with what a purple patch Mrs. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps endeavors to improve on this in her just published "Story of Jesus Christ." It was, it seems, a "cream-white dove that had been flying to and fro across Jordan"; "graceful, snowy, palpitating, like a thing half bird, half lily; pure as the film of the cloud through which it descended slowly." This is mere fustian, but no worse than thousands of attempts to improve on the New Testament narrations. These reach the climax of their severely simple beauty in the parables of Jesus.

But the intellectual power of Jesus has a wider scope than these. He was master of a homely wisdom, of the gnomic phrase, the aphorism, of a very penetrating insight into the spiritual realities and laws. He was as quick at repartee as the most famous wits, and had a gift of irony to match with theirs, as where he said, "Many good things have I done you: for which of these good things do you stone me?" He apprehended the great laws of intellectual morality, as where he said, "My judgment is just because I seek not mine own will." Everywhere in his apprehension and creation there is the poet's vision and the poet's touch. What Dr. Johnson wrote of Oliver Goldsmith might be written with equal truth of the young teacher of Nazareth,—"He touched nothing which he did not beautify."

Independence of mind is quite as much a moral as an intellectual trait, but it cannot be left out of the account in

any estimate of a man's intellectual character. It was characteristic of Jesus in a very marked degree. To understand *how* characteristic, we must understand something of the theological temper of the time in which Jesus lived and did his work. Probably there never was a time in which it took more intellectual and moral courage for a man to stand up and say, "Ye have heard that it hath been said" so and so, "but *I* say unto you" something quite different. Yet Jesus was apparently continually doing this, for we must not think of the Sermon on the Mount as spoken all at once. It is an aggregate of many utterances at many different times. That is a great note at the end,—"They were astonished at his teaching; for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes,"— not as the very people who were supposed pre-eminently to teach with authority. What does this mean? What *can* this mean, but that he spoke with the authority of personal conviction? There is nothing which so finds the human heart as that.

Personally and socially, Jesus was no thin-blooded, harsh ascetic, no sour-faced Puritan. The true salvation by his blood is not by that he shed upon the cross so much as by that which ran warm and ruddy in his veins. No lack there of red corpuscles. Humanity is "the greatest thing in the world,"—greater than love, because it includes love and much besides. And Jesus was as completely human as any man that ever saw the light of heaven and declared it sweet. The natural motion of his heart was joyous, free, and glad. In the fore part of his ministry his life seemed to him like a continual wedding feast. Why should the children of the bride-chamber mourn, he said, when the bridegroom is with them? Not ignorantly or unadvisedly was he contrasted with John the Baptist, who came neither eating nor drinking, and men said he had a devil; while Jesus came eating and drinking, and they said, "Behold, a man gluttonous and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." The fact is he was not choice about his company. In his freedom from conventionality he was an out-and-out Bohemian, a

democrat that has not been surpassed. He had no beatitude for the respectable, no leaning to their side. How social was his disposition, how human and humane his sympathies, there are dozens of his parables to show. He took delight in all the homely duties of the housewife in her kitchen and the farmer in his field. He was not one of Professor Royce's people who get their principal satisfaction out of their dissatisfaction with their satisfactions. That he liked to be liked and loved to be loved there is no doubt, if the Gospels report him truly in the main. He had no rebuke for Mary of Bethany sitting lovingly at his feet to the neglect of her housekeeping, nor for the woman pouring spikenard on his head. The ascetic Puritan despises all such things, but Jesus was no Puritan ascetic. The face of woman had for him no monkish terrors. Renan has sentimentalized so much about the women who clustered about Jesus and befriended him that some of his French gilt will stick to them for a long time, but it cannot mar the essential beauty and simplicity of their regard for Jesus or his for them.

There never was a great reformer or an earnest social innovator who did not find among women some of his most devoted followers. I thought I lent a sympathetic ear to Stepniak, the Russian Nihilist. But it was different, a little later, when he had a woman to talk with. Then he waxed eloquent. His whole voice and manner said, "Here is some one who will believe in me, sympathize with me, help me." It was so with Fox and Wesley and Garrison. It was so with Jesus in a marked degree. The parts taken by the women of the New Testament are leading parts in the great drama that is enacted there. But I am bound to think that the relation of Jesus to those women was not so much that of the spiritual director as that of the happy friend rejoicing in their generous love. I think the house in Bethany, to which he turned so often, offered him a garden of refreshment, and that he liked to go there for that reason, to rest himself from the harsh conflict in which he was engaged,

to permit himself to be cared for tenderly, to taste the sweetness of an approval and an admiration which he had been less god than devil to have stupidly foregone.

The intuitive habit of mind, which was so characteristic of Jesus, is apt to be associated with a moral temper, spontaneous, impulsive, sometimes rash. It was so in his case. Such an event as his entry into Jerusalem and his dealing with the money-changers in the temple, if at these points the reports are trustworthy, can only be explained upon the supposition that there were seasons when his judgment was as a wisp of straw in a tornado's whirling path. As for that petty triumph when a few childish followers hailed him as the Messiah, and threw branches from the palm-trees under the feet of the poor animal he rode, can it have been that for the moment he imagined it was possible for his conception of the Messiah's work to be amalgamated with that of the popular mind, so that he might be literally as well as spiritually the king of the Jews? The story tends this way; but, whatever it imports, it is one of several that exhibit Jesus in the full tide of that reckless spontaneity which is the high prerogative of "the uncalculating soul,"—one of several that go far to disabuse the minds of those people who imagine that Jesus was of too soft a fibre to approve himself to young people nourishing themselves on Stevenson's stories of adventure and Kipling's virile songs. I do not find any lack of likelihood in the representation that Jesus anticipated for himself a cruel death; and yet he went right on "bound in the spirit to Jerusalem," as afterward his great apostle. No lack of virility or courage in the man who pronounced those awful woes upon the Pharisees. I have often told you of the good man they troubled, who went to Dr. Channing with his trouble, asking how the meek and lowly Jesus could ever have skinned men with such hot and scalding words. And Dr. Channing read them to him so sorrowfully and tenderly that the good man said, "Oh, if that is the way *he* said them, it is all right, of course." But was that the way *he* said them? By no manner of means.

Dr. Channing's interpretation was based on the idea that Jesus was another Dr. Channing; and he was, in fact, something very different, with deep central fires of splendid indignation, that sometimes with volcanic energy broke through the habitual tenor of his life, as the earth's molten lava through some flowery plain. There is a possible conjunction in men's moral lives which has been described — and not inaptly — as "the wrath of the lamb"; and, of all human wrath, it is the most incalculable quantity, once it is fairly roused.

What the character of Jesus was on the emotional side we cannot fully understand until we have considered his relation to his own country and his own people. By the standards of the Pharisees and the Zealots, he was not a patriot, because he did not believe, as they did, in provoking the appalling enmity of the Roman power. The justification of his method was the absolute destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, forty years after his death. The political method of the Pharisees and Zealots meant exactly that. But no man ever loved his country and his people more than Jesus his. The universalism of the Gospels — by which I mean their inclusion of the Gentiles in the scope of the new dispensation — is probably something reflected back upon them from the universalism of Paul. The interest of Jesus, his enthusiasm and devotion, were confined to his own people. It was what was best for them that was continually in his thoughts, and especially for those of them who were the most miserable,— the unchurched, the outcasts, "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." In his responsiveness to the cry of national kinship he was such a man as George Eliot worshipped in her heart, and portrayed for us in Zisca, the gypsy chief of her splendid blank-verse novel, "The Spanish Gypsy." He has no encouragement for those who like to say, with Thomas Paine, "The world is my country," and who would dissolve all the bonds of political and religious tradition in a transport of universal philanthropy and religion. Whether you put this on the credit or the debit side

of his account, such is the fact that emerges from the New Testament, critically understood.

Coming now to the ethical and religious character, the second is entirely simple, while the first, the ethical, is compounded of two elements. One of these is an infinite compassion for all suffering and sinful folk. In Çakya Mouni there was this same compassion; and I shall not quarrel with my Buddhist friends, whether to the manner born or very recently converted, who think it was more strongly marked in Çakya Mouni than in Jesus. If it was so, the world is so much the richer by that sign. But the compassion of Jesus floods the New Testament as the waters of the ocean flood its basin and its bounding shores. Was ever man more pitiful? I do not know. I do not care. I could not ask for anything beyond the limit of his scope. Even the miracle stories, which attest nothing supernatural, and cannot be themselves confirmed, are not so altogether meaningless as our cruder rationalists insist. They are spontaneous testimonies to the passionate humanity in Jesus, which, if it could have done so, would have made the blind to see, the lame to walk, the dead to live again. As was the compassion of Jesus for the suffering, so was his compassion for the sinful, but with a difference. All suffering appealed to him, but not all sin in the same manner and degree. He made a distinction between brutish and fiendish sins. With the former he was very tender: with the latter he was very stern. The sins of passion, those which his followers have dealt with most severely, were venial in his eyes in comparison with the sins of malignity and selfish calculation. Especially was his hatred of hypocrisy unlimited. When he struck at that, he struck with all his might.

And this brings us to the second element in his ethical character. (You will remember that I said that there were two.) His hatred of hypocrisy was simply the most vivid illustration of his passion for integrity, the unity, the oneness of the outward and the inward man, of thought and act. This was the only doctrine of atonement, at-one-ment, that

Jesus knew anything about; and this was very near the centre of his heart and life. It was not enough to *do* good: you must *be* good. "Blessed are *the pure in heart*, for *they* shall see God."

And it was in the purity of his own heart, as in the stainless mirror of some mountain lake, that he saw reflected the benignity of his Heavenly Father's face. I have said that on the religious side the character of Jesus was simple, and it was so. The sum and substance of his religion — so much of it as was not ethical — was an unfaltering trust in God. He looked into his own heart, and wrote. His logic was exactly that of the Scotch epitaph: —

> "Here lie I, Martin Elginbrod.
> Have mercy on my soul, Lord God,
> As I would have, if I were God,
> And you were Martin Elginbrod."

It was exactly that of Browning when he sang in David's name: —

> "Do I find love so full in my nature, God's ultimate gift,
> That I doubt his own love can compete with it? here the parts shift;
> Here the creature surpass the Creator; the end what began?"

Never could he believe any such stuff as that. And so he had his doctrine of forgiveness. It meant that man, having done wrong, having plunged deep in wickedness, has an infinite power of self-recovery. It meant — and it did not exaggerate — the healing genius of the world. Or, if it did not mean this consciously to him, this was the ethical truth which underlay his thought of the divine forgiveness. If God can get himself incarnate in some kind-hearted man or woman, so much the swifter is the course, so much more sure the end. "Who is this that forgiveth sins?" asked some of those about him. As if there is anything that men can do more certainly than this, when they have the requisite amount of generous expectation, patience, love! Only there must be the requisite amount. And that means some-

times so much that the heart that is big enough to hold it must be of a capacity that shames the stars of heaven.

In conclusion let me say, as I have said before, that Jesus is by no means one of the freaks or riddles of personality. He is not one of those who thwart and baffle us with their singularity, but a man remarkable for his simplicity. The lines of his spiritual architecture are not those of a labyrinth, but those of a great religious temple, frank and free and strong; of such a temple as, cleaving broadly to the earth, lifts one great spire, like Salisbury's, into the air and light and spaciousness of heaven. But those of you who have seen the glorious minster of Antwerp will remember how the people's homes and workshops snuggle up against its walls and buttresses. Even so the frank simplicity of Jesus has clustering about it a little world of homely, pleasant things; for he was every inch a man, and nothing was foreign to him of human work or play, of human joy or sorrow, of human victory or defeat. There is no life recorded that has more the accent of humanity, or that less requires anything supernatural to account for its immediate impression and its ultimate effect, than the life which at this merry Christmas time demands the well-considered admiration of all earnest men and women, of whatever sect or creed.

THE BIBLE OF THE HEART.

In a very interesting passage Emerson has told us how there are several audiences in every audience. One speaker will find one of these audiences, and one of them another. Sometimes the same speaker, in the course of his address, will find them all,— the trivial, the common-sense, the imaginative, the intellectual, the moral, the religious. And it is just so with the Bible. It is at the same time one and several. A great many discussions about it are like the discussions of the two knights about the shield,— one saying it was silver, and the other it was gold, and dashing themselves together to prove it one thing or the other,— the fact being it was both, but one of the two knights was looking on the silver side, the other on the golden. Matthew Arnold wrote a famous book about the Bible called "Literature and Dogma." There was here a clear indication of two of the Bibles that are bound up in the one, the literary and the dogmatic. Arnold's contention was that the Bible was literature, and not dogma, and what he said upon this head was deserving of the carefullest attention; and yet I cannot help thinking that he was too severe with those who think it a dogmatic book. For it is very certain to my mind that a great deal of it was meant to be dogmatic by the men who wrote it; that is to say, meant to be doctrinal finality. That is what dogma is,— doctrinal finality. The words "dogma" and "doctrine" are often used interchangeably; but a doctrine does not become a dogma until it is considered final and irreversible. Arnold, I am persuaded, vastly underrated the amount of dogma in the Bible,— not the amount of doctrinal finality in it, but the amount put forth as such; yet this element is generally so vastly overrated that we could not regret his

opposite exaggeration, were that likely to redress the imperfect scales. But exaggeration in one direction is never the best way of correcting exaggeration in another, in matters of intellectual apprehension, however it may be in the great moral conflicts of mankind.

For a great many people, for the great majority, the Bible has always been the Bible of dogma, the Bible of theological finality, an armory of texts for proving this, that, or the other doctrine about God or man or Jesus or the atonement or future punishment and so on. For the purposes of such people a text has been a text, one text as good as another, whether in the Old Testament or New, and in whatever book of either. It might be the words of a saint or the words of a sinner. If it was a good text with which to trip up or knock down an antagonist, it was taken at its face value, and no questions asked. A rough, popular satire on this way of doing things is the collocation of the texts, "And Judas went and hanged himself: go thou, and do likewise." In sorry truth, this is not more absurd than the dragging together of many of the texts which have been dragged together by the theologians. Our Unitarian fathers cherished the fond imagination that they could bring every text that was less clear and that seemed less true and good to the test of the texts that were more clear or that for one reason or another they liked best. As well quench a line of Beowulf or Chaucer with a line of Tennyson or Browning, as well attempt to elucidate a line of Langland with a line of Pope! But, in general, it would seem as if the most repulsive and forbidding texts had been those to which the theologians had gone for their Procrustes beds on which to stretch all the others. And very wonderful has been the ingenuity with which "confirmation strong" has been extracted from texts of Holy Writ that bore no obvious sign of any possible relation to the matter seeking proof; and very sad has been the outcome of this business of the theological magician, whereby all the marvellous variety of the Old Testament and New, of the prophets and the psalmists, apostles and evangelists, has

been converted into a homogeneous mass of dogma, stiff and hard and cold. The poor woman in the hospital imagined herself invited to the most luxurious feasts, but somehow every dish had the flavor of her customary gruel. The theological magician, when he manipulates the Bible, is the victim of a worse insanity. For him a real feast is spread; but, when he has worked his charm upon it, it all has the flavor of his customary brimstone, or, if of several articles, of the untempting "thirty-nine."

There is the Bible of dogma. There is also the Bible of literature. The extent to which this appeals to men has little or nothing to do with their theological prepossessions. You may be orthodox or heretical, theist or agnostic, but, if you know a beautiful thing when you see it, the Bible as a literary product is for you a treasure of inestimable worth. It was this to Huxley, as it was not to many an Anglican bishop, because he was quicker to apprehend literary value than most bishops. It was this to Matthew Arnold, as it was not to the Pope of Rome. And, as a thing of beauty,— the beauty of literature,— the Bible is as sure to be a joy forever as any other product of the human soul. It will outlast the Pyramids and the Parthenon, the portraits of Rembrandt, the Madonnas of Raphael, the architecture of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. But what has etched and moulded here for our delight is as mysterious as what has "moulded the lineaments and tinged the eyelids and the hands" of Lionardo's "La Gioconda" and his other smiling women. The original writers labored well; but many since their day have entered into their labors,—Jerome and Wiclif and Tyndale and the makers of the King James translation. And, when we are admiring a passage in our English Bible, we often do not know which of these has contributed most to our enjoyment. The splendid rhythms of the Vulgate linger in the cadences of many a passage of the prophets and the Psalms. But, however it came to be what it is now, the English Bible is a literary monument of unspeakable nobility. As for the theological systems that have been drawn

out of it or stuffed into it, they have had their day; and they will cease to be. They will perish, but that will endure, and its years shall have no end. To learn to write well, it is more necessary to read the Bible than any other book. Here Ruskin got the best that could be had to glorify his page, John Bright the ardors of his eloquence. You may think less of it than Ingersoll; but you cannot dispense with the treasures that are laid up for you in Isaiah and the Psalms, in the narratives of the Hexateuch and Judges, Samuel and Kings, in the Book of Job, in the New Testament Gospels and Epistles, in the terrible but sublime Apocalypse, if you wish your page to glow and burn with the allusive light which many thousand times has quickened the imagination of mankind and purified its heart with tenderness and tears. Make a random plunge into the Psalms, and you may come on this passage as likely as on any other: "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them. The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad. Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

Or the random plunge may bring you upon this in Job: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . . Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corners thereof; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? . . . Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in search of the depth? . . . Where is the way where light dwelleth? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof? . . . Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail? . . . Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades, or loose the bands of

Orion? . . . Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say, Here we are?" Indeed, I can, a modern Job might answer, and say "Yes," "Yes," to many of the other questions to which, in this glorious passage, an abject confession of ignorance is contemplated as the only possible reply. But this is neither here nor there. The literary quality of the Bible is not in the least impeached by any failure on its part to anticipate the course of modern science. An ignorance so simple and naïve is as good for literary purposes as the fullest knowledge.

But make another random plunge. This time it is a passage in Isaiah that is the priceless pearl: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. . . . And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: they all gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from afar, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. . . . The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of Jehovah. . . . Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows? Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish. . . . The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious."

All our random plunges so far have been in the Old Testament. Let us make one in the New: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims upon the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from which they set out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country; that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath

prepared for them a city." But, if I go on in this way, I shall exhaust all my time, and shall not reach the goal toward which I strive. Let it suffice for the present that there is this Bible of literature,— than the Bible of dogma a thousand times more excellent,— abounding in all beautiful and noble things, to which all those who care for literature must go, and those especially who hope to write anything that men will not willingly let die. There is help for such in Addison, in Ruskin, in De Quincey, in Newman, Burke, and Milton, and in many another writer of severe and calm or splendid and impassioned prose; but, for those who love our English speech, there is no other help so good as that which is the nearest to their hand, in the book which no man, however poor, need go without.

In this connection let me say that very recently a number of the great lyrical passages in the Bible have been included in a collection of the best English lyrics from Chaucer to Poe, and rightly, too; for what makes these lyrics beautiful is quite as much the English as the Hebrew element in them. But what I wish particularly to say is this: that these Bible lyrics, measured by purely literary standards, make almost all the other poetry in that collection (and it is the best poetry in the English language) seem comparatively thin and poor.

There is the Bible of dogma and the Bible of literature, and there is also the Bible of the critic. You know well enough that I do not undervalue its importance. The constructive achievements of the Higher Criticism are, to my apprehension, among the noblest of the scientific mind. They are built upon the ruins of the Bible as hitherto conceived,— a supernatural book, supernaturally inspired, and verbally infallible. They found the book an unassorted heap of the most various material. They have assorted it; and out of it they have built a temple sacred to the evolution of a religion and a race,— a temple which, burying its lower courses deep in the soil of a barbaric faith and superstition, climbs to the towering heights of prophecy and psalm, and

soars into the sky-communing spires and finials of the New Testament religion of Jesus and of Paul. For those who are able to appreciate this construction, to comprehend this synthesis, it is an achievement that abounds in intellectual and moral inspiration. For a lot of puppets, obedient to the movements of a hand behind the scenes, it gives us a succession of men as purely human as any who have ever trod the blessed acres of the world,— the best as human as the worst; ay, the humanity of Jesus far more conspicuous than that of Solomon or Herod, or Pilate, who consented to his death. But this Bible of criticism is a reality which we may not count ourselves to have apprehended without much patience of study and research. It cannot well be got at second hand, or, rather, at fourth or fifth hand.

It is not enough to hear a lecture on it now and then or read some popular exposition. These things are better than nothing, yet they do not go very far. But anything more than these is beyond the reach of men and women who are troubled, like Martha, about many things; who have little time or aptitude for studious thought.

Wherefore I cannot but be glad that besides the Bible of dogma and the Bible of literature and the Bible of criticism there is also the Bible of the heart. As for the Bible of dogma, we cannot too warmly speed the parting guest. But, if we can have the Bible of literature and the Bible of criticism,— these in addition to the Bible of the heart,— we are most fortunate. If we cannot have all three, which are to be preferred? No two, I should say, of which the Bible of the heart is not one. And for the second I should say the Bible of criticism, because, while a man can have the Bible of literature without having the Bible of criticism, hardly is it possible for any man to have the Bible of criticism without having the Bible of literature, if he has any quick and vital sense of what is beautiful in literature. A word out of my own experience may be more helpful here than any glittering generalities. And this the word: that never did I begin to comprehend the Bible as literature, the Bible as a golden

treasury of beautiful thoughts and expressions and pictures and stories and poems, until I had applied to this microcosm the rule of Goethe for the larger world, and lived "resolvedly in the whole," endeavoring to grasp the mutual relations of the several parts, and of all these to a general conception. Emerson says that "the moon never shines so sweetly as when it shines upon our necessary journey"; and, if I had gone up and down the Bible seeking for beautiful things, it does not seem to me that I should have found so many, nor anything like so many, as have flashed upon me as I have bent my shoulders to my spade, digging, as for the hidden treasures of the farmer's field, for the facts and the relations which are involved in a critical understanding of the Old Testament and New.

But, if we cannot have both the Bible of criticism and the Bible of the heart, which is the more to be desired? *If only one, the Bible of the heart.* And why? Before answering this question, I must make plain what I mean by the Bible of the heart.

I mean the Bible as it appeals to our hearts, to what in us is kind and true and tender and forgiving, to our dissatisfaction with our meaner selves, to our desires and yearnings for the higher things. The way in which it does this is most uncritical. All is grist that comes to our mill. We pounce upon our own wherever we find it, and what is not our own by its original intention we make our own by means of the transforming energy of our unconscious will. The Bible of the heart is a Bible constituted of those parts of the Bible in its entirety which are selected by the heart according to its needs, its hopes, its griefs, its aspirations, or which are transformed by the heart to meet its various requirements. The Scotchwoman said that, if there was a cross-text in the Bible, her minister would be sure to find it, and preach on it. Here was a method that reverses the method of the heart. This selects everything that is bright and pleasant and helpful, and its plastic stress on many things transforms them so that they are just as helpful as the things intrinsi-

cally good. It would be interesting to discover, if we could, how many of the most precious texts have no such meaning in their connection and their proper implication as they have in the Bible of the heart. There is a text in Ecclesiastes which denies the personal immortality: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit unto God who gave it." The idea is that of absorption in the Deity. But to the average heart we have here an affirmation of immortality, and as such the words are set over the entrance to Mount Auburn. There have been many transformations quite as radical as this. Both music and theology have conspired to give some of them a wider currency. "I know that my Redeemer liveth," is the most astonishing of these, the words in their connection having not the remotest hint of the meaning commonly ascribed to them, being simply an expression of Job's assurance that *before his death* his vindication would be made perfectly clear. Of course, the dogmatic perversion of texts must be reprobated and opposed; but none the less on this account the heart is "practically sovereign" over the Bible, and what it gathers to itself belongs to it by that right of eminent domain which the heart has over all literature, and which no one thinks of denying to it beyond the Bible's scope.

The Bible of the heart is of much less extent than the nine hundred pages of my revised version, the eleven hundred of my King James. And it contains very few of the things to which Colonel Ingersoll and such as he object: none of "the mistakes of Moses," — it is one of the mistakes of Colonel Ingersoll that Moses was one of the Old Testament writers,— none of the imprecations of the Psalmist, none of the defective genealogies, none of the incomprehensible theology of Paul, none of the terrible imaginings of the writer of the Book of Revelation. Of what does this Bible of the heart consist? Of every word of happiest confidence and tenderest trust in the Old Testament or New; of the prophets' righteous indignation against cruelty and oppression, of their passionate enthusiasm for their country's

highest good; of those immortal passages that celebrate the wonder and the beauty of the earth and the world; of the Psalmist's struggles, sorrows, burdens, and anxieties, his deep contrition, his exalted hope; of many things in the Johannine writings which have been translated out of their original particularism into a universal language; of Paul's thirteenth Corinthians and many other passages in his Epistles wherein the man is everything, the theologian nothing; of the sayings of Jesus, so compassionate with the sinful, so pitiful of the oppressed, so eager for men's spiritual good, so trustful of the Father, so sorry for the blindness of men's eyes, the slowness of their feet: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that stonest the prophets and killest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."

It is because the Bible of the heart is so eclectic, so discriminative, such a little book with so much in it, that a great many people, whose only Bible is this Bible of the heart, are utterly confounded by such criticisms and assaults as those made upon the Bible by the iconoclasts who bring telescopes and microscopes to its defects, and to its excellences and beauties a confirmed myopia or cataract or close-shut eyes. It does not seem to them that their Bible can be the same Bible as that of the iconoclasts. And, indeed, it is not. Theirs, as I have said, has none of the harsh things in it, none of the hateful and incomprehensible and contradictory things that so balk the vision of the Bibliophobists. And for the same reasons these Bibliophobists utterly fail to understand why so many good people — excellent people — care for the Bible with a very great affection. It is not *their* Bible that they do care for, — a Bible made up almost exclusively of things doubtfully true, doubtfully moral, doubtfully kind and sweet and good, mythologies and theologies and apocalypses and genealogies, and the like, most burdensome and wearisome. The Bible never would have had the hold it has had on the generations of

the earth if it had been Colonel Ingersoll's Bible. They would have cared for it but little more than he does now. The Bible of the centuries has been the Bible of the heart And the Bible of the heart has been the heart of the Bible,— the sweet kernel of its righteousness and peace, encased in the rude husk of its theology and particularism and other temporary and indifferent stuff.

It is just the same with the Bible in these relations as it is with the traditional theology. I find good people wondering how it is that, with such a gospel as that of our Unitarian belief and hope inviting them, so many people can remain content with the bad tidings of great misery and sorrow expounded in the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England or the thirty-three of the Westminster confession. But the fact is, the bad tidings of great misery and sorrow do not exist for hundreds and thousands of people whom we call orthodox. Even where science and literature and the modern spirit have not wrought upon them, like April winds upon the drifted snows of March, setting the wind-flower and the violet in their place, the selective principle has been at work, taking what it likes of the traditional theology and leaving what it does not like, taking the loving Father and Jesus dying for their sakes, the joy of the believer and the blessed heaven in store, leaving election and reprobation and total depravity and eternal hell and the quenching of God's anger with the blood of his dear Son. Oh, it is not so bad a system of theology that this selective principle brings into the foreground of belief and hope; and, when you take the traditional system and let both the modern spirit and the selective principle have their way with it, and then, over against the cheerful bright remainder, see the void which such a great master in science as Huxley tells us is the only thing that remains, surely it is not at all strange that a great many people prefer abiding with their orthodoxy of the selected and transformed variety to venturing further on a wide and troubled sea.

All this is a deflection from the main line of my discourse,

but justified, I think you will agree with me, because it illustrates how the Bible of the heart maintains its sway over so many, notwithstanding many things which a purely negative criticism has assailed as unscientific or unhistorical or immoral or unlovely in one way or another. In the Bible of the heart these things are printed in invisible ink. They simply do not exist. No more do any of the portentous theological constructions, things *about* the Bible, theories of its verbal or plenary inspiration, and ingenious attempts to keep up a show of these constructions, while sacrificing every particle of their intellectual contents. In the Bible of the heart so much is inspired as is inspiring, and no more; and that is any word from Genesis to Revelation that spontaneously answers to some human need, without much reference, or any, to what it meant for Joel or Isaiah or the unknown evangelist who wrote it from eighteen to five-and-twenty centuries ago.

There are personal aspects of this matter that must have a passing word. For how many men and women is the Bible, not merely in the selective way I have described, but in its physical totality, a Bible of the heart, because it was the Bible that their father and their mother loved so much! I have seen a Bible in a country town, read for several generations in one family, the corners of the covers and the leaves worn off by the rough, toil-worn hands a good half inch or more; and I have never taken in my hand a more heart-moving book, nor in the Christmas season one more beautiful. And then there have been the Bibles — hundreds and thousands of them — in which the mother's hand has written on the fly-leaf: —

> "Remember, love, who gave thee this
> When other years shall come,
> When she who had thy earliest kiss
> Sleeps in her narrow tomb;
> Remember 'twas a mother gave
> The gift to one she'd die to save."

Could any Bible have this stanza written in it, and not be

a Bible of the heart? I must confess that there is not a stanza in Tennyson or Browning which I cannot read without less "trembling of the heart." How many a lad upon the edge of battle, or in the more dangerous vicissitudes of some populous town, has in that bit of writing found such inspiration as in no printed page of all the thousand coming after it! I trust it may be long before the mothers of the race forget that simple stanza or the habit which their mothers had of writing it upon the Bible's whitest page. There could be no better insurance for the safety of the vessel starting out in search of brave adventures on the seas of God.

There are Bibles of the heart that vary with every individual according to the individual need, to this one speaking comfort and to that one incitement to courageous action or a noble shame. But there have been Bibles of the heart that have been as selective as the most individual examples, and yet have had a common message for great companies of men and women. How was it with our Abolitionists in the days of their heroic battle against fearful odds? It is true that the pro-slavery devil could also quote Scripture to his purpose in the glibbest manner. Was not Abraham a slaveholder, and did not Paul send back Onesimus, and did not Jesus say, "Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you," and did not that mean that, if our slaves ran away, we should want other people to send them back, and that therefore we ought to send back theirs? So a distinguished Methodist divine interpreted the text. But what were the half-dozen texts the slave-owner and slave-catcher could appropriate as compared with the wealth of prophecy with which Garrison and his fellow-toilers enriched their glorious testimony against shameful wrong? In those days there came to Marblehead, where I was then a boy, one of the anti-slavery apostles; and his text was, "Show my people their transgressions," and he did it well. And another came and his text, as I remember it, was, "And I saw a seething pot, and its base was at the North"; and believe me there was

death in the pot for Northern "dough-faces," as we called the "Northern men with Southern principles." There was no exigency or event for which those men wanted a Bible text, and looked for it in vain. It was in Bible language that Garrison described the Constitution of the United States,— "a covenant with death and an agreement with hell." It was in Bible language that Sumner — and well do I remember how the words rang out — urged upon Lincoln the assumption of the war power for the emancipation of the slaves: "Let my people go!"

What think you now? Did I speak well or ill when, back there in my sermon, I said, If we can have only one Bible, let that one be the Bible of the heart? So much to me are the Bible of literature and the Bible of criticism that I half repent that utterance already. For the Bible of the dogmatists I have no sneaking fondness whatsoever. But then, thank Heaven, we can have — a good many of us — the Bible of the critics, and a good many more the Bible of literature, and at the same time the Bible of the heart, in as many different editions as our individual tastes and needs require. Doubtless the critical sense will sometimes give us pause, and oblige us to consider whether our personal interpretation has any justification in the original intention of the text; but there is an abundance in the Bible that came from the deep heart of nature and humanity that is of universal scope and application. And not only so; but the Bible of the critics has elements that the Bible of the heart can assimilate as readily as the purple ash the elements that give it its distinctive hue. The Jesus of criticism is such a Jesus of the heart as has been hidden from men's eyes since his contemporaries saw him in the flesh. And still the fact remains that, however it may be for some,— perhaps for many,— there are many others for whom the Bible of the critic and the Bible of literature both are gardens sealed; and how can we but be glad that for these the Bible of the heart flings wide its gates, and invites them to come in and wander at their will, to pluck rosemary for remembrance, and heart's

ease and forget-me-nots, and many another flower sweet with the fragrance of old days or pungent with the thoughts of wasted hours, or breathing forth a tender hope that some day we shall be again with those whom we so sorely miss in that undiscovered country where "beyond these voices there is peace"?

THE TRANSFIGURED LIFE.

In that beautiful story of the transfiguration of Jesus which we find in the New Testament, beautiful however it arose and whatever grain of fact it has imbedded in its nebulous haze of the imagination's golden light, it is said of Jesus that, "as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered." Those words have always seemed to me a striking symbol of a wide range of things in our experience of life's various good and ill. What happened to Jesus, there upon the mountain, we ourselves have known to happen to this one or that, when, in the joy of his thanksgiving or the rapture of his trust or the ardor of his aspiration, a light has come upon the upturned face as if the heavens had been opened and the closed eyes had seen unspeakable things.

But these things are of comparatively small account. I think of prayer not merely as some spoken utterance, whether of ritual observance or spontaneous thanks and praise, but as an attitude of mind, as the desire, the yearning, and the striving for what the individual conceives to be the good of life. And, so regarding it, the illustrations are innumerable of the law that, as a man prays, the fashion of his countenance is altered. Herbert Spencer, in some earlier essay, takes issue sharply with the proverbial declaration that beauty is only skin-deep. It is mind-deep, he tells us, and heart-deep. For, see, expression is feature in the making. And what determines expression is the ideas of the mind, the feelings of the heart. Given time enough, a sufficient number of generations, and expression will modify not only the muscles of the countenance, but its osseous frame. And so the phrase which tells us there in the New Testament of the changing countenance of Jesus, as he prayed to God,

becomes the history of the changing countenance of the universal Son of Man. Since first he fairly got upon his feet,—there are those who think he has not yet got used to the position,—his prayer has been for more of knowledge, more of beauty, more of mutual helpfulness; and, as he has prayed, the fashion of his countenance has been altered. It has become less brutal and more human. It has shown less of passion, more of thought; less of suspicion, more of trust; less of hate and anger, more of love.

But these sweeping generalizations are less interesting than the individual examples which are familiar to us all of the transfiguration which comes to men and women according to their prayers. George Eliot somewhere remarks upon the pathos and the tragedy of the incongruity that we often see between people's faces and their souls, so that you will find a beautiful soul looking out through features that seem to have no correspondence with their harshness or their crudity, and sometimes a soul that is all shapeless and deformed masking itself with a face that ought to mean a world of inward loveliness and peace.

But, wherever we have these incongruities, we also have a gradual approximation of the outward to the inward fact. Within the limits of a lifetime the structural qualities of no human countenance can be radically changed; but that law —expression is feature in the making—works and works, and within the limits of a lifetime it can work a wondrous transformation. We have known souls so beautiful that no living face or perfect picture we have ever seen has seemed to us divinely fair enough to image forth the inward loveliness, and sometimes they have been imprisoned behind faces carrying no suggestion of the virtue and nobility behind the fleshly bars. But, as the years have gone, that inward virtue and nobility have etched and moulded in the outward lineaments, until we have found ourselves wondering how we could ever have imagined that they were repulsive or even plain. And, on the other hand, have we not known men and women with an original outfit of good looks

that made them exceedingly attractive and brought them no little admiration, whose faces have degenerated from year to year as they have prayed for poor and bestial things, until, as compared with the homeliest transfigured by the inward light of truth and love, they have seemed a hundred times less beautiful?

There is nothing that men pray for that has not a certain plastic stress upon their entire physical organism, their faces with the rest. Here are women praying for social admiration, for the distinction of being superlatively well-dressed, or for a brilliant reputation for the give and take of the small talk of the drawing-room, or for the doubtful fame of being upon all the charitable committees, or, it may be, for some lesser good than these. No matter what it is, the prayer works in the face. It registers itself in lip and cheek and eye; and the face grows more and more anxious or self-conscious or insipid, as the case may be. Here are men whose real habitual prayer is for material wealth, for luxury and show, for the pleasures of the table, or for baser things; and it is pitiful to see how the manner of their praying tells upon their facial lines,— most pitiful when a man has started well and cared much for the better things, and then somehow been captured by the poorer and the worse.

Reading much ecclesiastical biography, I often have an opportunity to study the development of faces where portraits are given of the younger and the elder man. The change is seldom for the better. The prudence, caution, craft, which are well-nigh inseparable from ecclesiastical positions of the highest rank, are at last dominant and all-engrossing. Some of our magazines have latterly been publishing a great many series of pictures of literary and other people. They are very interesting as showing how the dominant prayer, the one thing most desired, has fixed its sign and seal upon the face. The same law has the most diverse illustrations,— here the degeneration of the originally fine and good, and there the transfiguration of the plain and even the repulsive by the persistent striving for the best

and honorablest things. Why, there are faces of such original beauty that, had there been a soul to match, men—hundreds of them—might well have sat up all night for another glimpse of them, as they did for Elizabeth Gunning, so wonderful would be the outcome of the fine conspiracy of flesh and soul. And sometimes we have this operation. And sometimes, too, we have the transfiguration of the plainest faces by the operation of an inward grace and charm; and, wherever this appears, we can take up the note of Dr. Donne, and sing,—

> "No spring nor summer beauty hath such grace
> As I have seen in one autumnal face."

But it is a little matter, you will say,—and I shall heartily agree with you,—that, as a man prays, the fashion of his countenance is altered. The important matter is that, as he prays, the fashion of his mind is altered, and the fashion of his heart and soul, the fashion of the entire inward man. The changing of the countenance,— that, too, is interesting and important, though not *so* important, because it indicates and illustrates the unity of human nature, that we are not souls that *have* bodies or souls *in* bodies, but at once soul and body, and that in this conjunction it is the soul that is the formative and determinative force.

> "For of the soul the body form doth take;
> For soul is form, and doth the body make."

And, as it is with the body and the soul of man, so is it with the universal body and soul. They are not two, but one,—matter and spirit, the universe and God. The universe is his body; and, as the spirit of the man or woman works in the plastic flesh, the plastic countenance, from year to year, so for innumerable centuries and ages has the World-soul which we call God been working in the plastic substance of the world. And we have in that substance not something foreign to the Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed, but the brightness of his glory and the ex-

press image of his person; and he is not unknowable or unknown, but infinitely knowable, and known to us like the beloved friend who comes to us, her whole soul in her face.

But this, too, is by the way. I say again that the important thing is not the changing countenance, but the changing soul; and that is serious and important only as a sign of this. Yet the prayer which changes the soul's fashion, even as that which changes the fashion of the countenance,— for they are ever one and the same,— is no outward ritual or uttered speech. It is the soul's converse with and devotion to its ideals. These, be they high or low, have hands to shape us into the image of their beauty or their bane. Forever beautiful is Hawthorne's story of the great stone face and the boy — his name was Ernest, I believe — who lived in eager expectation of some saint or hero who would come and wear those noble lineaments which stood out so clear and grand against the western sky. And this one came, and that, but not the correspondence long desired. And the boy became a youth, and the youth a man, and the man grew old; and still the long-expected did not come. Nay, but he did at last, and where but in the face which had been turned so often to the great stone face with admiration, hope, and love? Am I like a man who walks a labyrinth or the interwoven streets of some strange old city, and comes back ever and anon to the place whence he set out? Have I come back by the way of Hawthorne's story to the doctrine which I have already dwelt upon too long,— "As he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered"? Yes, but his countenance had altered only because his soul had grown into the image of its own ideal through lifelong converse with it, and devotion to its truth and good. And here, too, is the noble lesson that, let a man cherish any excellent ideal, and, if it does not come and embody itself in the community about him, it will come and embody itself in his own life.

I find no little consolation in this thought when I look abroad upon the chaos of opinions on the subject of social reform that is now surging in the world. Many of these

opinions seem to me altogether vain, and many others only half or quarter true, and some of them dictated by an ungenerous and envious spirit. But, whatever the opinion, whatever the social dream, the ideal excellence, it manipulates the plastic substance of the man as the sculptor does the plastic substance in which he models shapes of beauty or of terror for the delight or chastening of our hearts. And, however it may be with some, I am sure that many cherish their ideal of social change in an unselfish way; and, even though it be unwise, impracticable, I like to think, and dare believe I have a right to do so, that, whatever the outcome for society, the man himself, the social dreamer, is changed little by little into something vastly better than the man who has no outlook beyond his own personal advantage. "Christ formed in you the hope of glory," was one of Paul's great words. It is the hope of glory not only for the individual, but for society. "Justice does not exist without us as a fact," George Eliot says, "but within us as a great longing." But, when it exists in all men as a great longing, it will exist without us as a fact.

> "When the Church is social worth,
> When the State House is the hearth,
> Then the perfect State has come,
> The republican at home."

The Concord farmer who came back from Boston, where he had been to sell his stuff, always congratulating himself that nobody had cheated him, was told by Emerson that, when he should be as certain that he had cheated nobody, and as anxious and resolved to have it so, his market-wagon would become a chariot of the sun. I like to think that thousands drive such chariots. Let theirs become the general social disposition, and the wide earth shall be a chariot of God, careering swiftly to the goal, while the applauding angels stand and mark.

> "The thing we long for, that we are
> For one transcendent moment."

And it is a corollary of this proposition that persistent longing shapes and moulds us into the image of the thing for which we long. In Michel Angelo's soul, could you have walked through that as you can through St. Peter's and the Vatican, you would have found not only the brooding meditation of his Lorenzo Penseroso, the vague yearning of his Dying Captive, the stern judgment of his mighty Lawgiver, and the vastness of St. Peter's dome, but also the beauty and the grandeur of the things for which he yearned but could not bring to pass,— the splendid tomb of Julius and the mountain of Carrara carved as Xerxes would have carved Mount Athos,—

> "High, human profile, nose and chin distinct,
> Mouth uttering rhythms of silence to the sky."

And what is true of the greatest artists I like to think, and dare believe I may, of many of the humblest of their guild. Few things, you will agree with me, are more pitiful, more tragical, than one of our great annual exhibitions of paintings. Above the eye-line and below it, and even on it, there are so many pictures that you do not care for, that you cannot imagine that anybody should care for, though sometimes you are surprised to find that the thing you do not like one bit has caught another's fancy, and has on it the magic legend, "Sold." What patience, what enthusiasm, have gone to the making of those pictures which have no beauty that you should desire them! What sense of fellowship with the great ones of the artist guild,— with Constable and Gainsborough and Turner, with Corot and Daubigny and Millet, with Kensett and Inness and Gifford! But what sickening disappointment when the completed work attracts no eager purchaser, excites no cordial admiration, and perhaps provokes some sneering comment from the art critic of the *Daily Cynic*, who is nothing if not venomous!

If this were the whole story, how miserably pathetic, how unspeakably tragical, it would be! But it is not the whole story. The conscientious artist, cherishing an ideal of sweet

perfection, doing his best to put something of that into his picture, has at least succeeded in putting something of it into his soul. He has been one in spirit with the glorious fellowship of all those who have loved beauty with a great and masterful affection. He has, it may be, more of the spirit of the true artist than some of the most famous who have turned their studios into manufactories of marketable reproductions of some happy hit. And often, where creation lags, appreciation marches in the van; and to appreciate the work of genius is more important for the development of a soul than to achieve some small immediate success.

As it is with the painter, so is it with the artist working in any material whatsoever, marble or bronze or musical notation or architecture, which some one has called frozen music, but which oftentimes makes easy Thoreau's problem where he says, "We must warm ourselves with ice," or that most plastic and most subtile material of all, the written language which contains the life-blood of a thousand master spirits, and who shall say of how many millions of the humbler sort? How many artists working in these various materials have failed of any outward visible success, and yet have scored a noble victory in that they have, through their devotion to the ideal of beauty in sculpture, music, architecture, literature, so wrought and moulded in the substance of their lives, that these have been more beautiful than the statue which they could not shape, the music that they could not write, the cathedral that they could not build, the poem or the imaginative prose to which they could not attain! And this is being saved by hope. This is the life's transfiguration by the soul's constancy to an ideal.

You think, perhaps, that I have forgotten how few, if any, of us here are poets born or made, or artists upon any line; but I have not.

> "The law which rounds the pebble rounds the sphere."

That is a nice bit of poetry; but, as a statement in natural philosophy, I fear it is not sound, seeing that the pebble is

rounded by attrition, and the sphere by the co-ordination of its centripetal and centrifugal attractions. But what is not true upon the physical plane is true upon the spiritual. Only, the question arises, Which is the pebble, and which is the sphere upon the spiritual plane? One poet answers without hesitation,—

> "To make a happy fireside clime
> For weans and wife,
> That's the true pathos, and sublime,
> Of human life."

I find a similar doctrine in Mr. Barrett Wendell's admirable book on Shakspere, not the freshest subject in the world; but his book is anything but stale. Nothing is more common than to depreciate and deplore the practical element in Shakspere. "Among imaginative artists he is unique for practical prudence." But is this blame or praise? Blame, say the critics generally; but Mr. Wendell says, Not so! He claims for practical ability a large imaginative element. "What the successful tradesman has really done," he says, "is to perform a feat of constructive imagination every whit as marvellous, if not as beautiful, as the work of any artist or poet. Facing the actual world as he sees it, all against him, he has made in his mind, perhaps unwittingly, an image of some state of things not yet in existence; a popular demand for some new commodity or some sudden shift in values. Acting on this perception, to which lesser people are blind, he has outstripped others in the race for fortune. To put the matter perhaps extravagantly, what vulgar criticism would call grossly material success, really involves a feat of creative imagination in certain aspects more wonderful than any other known to human experience; for, while the creative artist is bound only to imitate the divine imagination which controls the universe, the man who achieves practical success is bound so to share that divine imagination as for a while even to share, too, the prophetic foresight of divinity." I should be sorry if any of you on

the strength of this deliverance should go home from church this morning feeling yourselves, in the proud consciousness of your material successes, to be bigger men than Shakspere, the poet, ever was. But I think that much more could be said for the imagination in business than Mr. Wendell has said for it, though perhaps in terms less transcendental. I would say this even of commerce. It is not often that the new poetry of the time requires so much imagination as a new business combination. And, when we come to manufacture and invention, I often find in these much rarer poems than in some of those volumes of poetry which are sent to me for review,—so many of them that I vary the saying* of Thomas Fuller, and say, "The printers have gained most in our time by those books by which the writers have lost." Not many poems ever written are such triumphs of the imagination as the steam printing-press, the locomotive, the electric telegraph, the telephone.

But all this is a by-path running parallel with the main road of my discourse. Be these things as they may, it is not less true of the most ordinary affairs of business and domestic life that, as a man prays, the fashion of his soul is altered, and becomes more beautiful and blessed or more ugly and deformed. No man can do his work well, as well as he can, year in and year out, and not be hacking and hewing at something more impalpable than wood or stone, and not be shaping something more durable than iron or steel, even his own character, his own spiritual destiny. Every workshop is a workshop for forging that, for making it strong and beautiful. It is the vice of many of our social prophets that they are continually looking away from a man's work for his best school of character. But, if he does not find it there, he will find it nowhere under the wide heaven's cope. And, on the other hand, let the employer of laborers, skilled or unskilled, do what he can to make his relation with them a just and generous one, a kindly, sympathetic,

*Which was that "learning hath gained most in our time by those books by which the printers have lost."

human one, and not only will he do more for them than the walking delegate or the academic reformer, but, even though he fail in many things, the good which he attempts shall build him up by steady increments into the stature of a manhood which counts for more by the true standard of success than millions in the funds.

It is so with those who go abroad, and it is not otherwise with those who stay at home, for those whose business is the daily household and domestic care. These have material to work with in comparison with which the finest of Carrara marble is but dull and coarse, the notation of the musical composer narrow in its range, the words with which the poet and the writer work their spells but poor and perishable things. A mother's dream of what her child may be is more than Shakspere's dream of what his Desdemona or Cordelia may become. But, if the material in which the mother works is more rare and subtile than the sculptor's, the musician's, or the poet's, it is often, too, less tractable than theirs. Yet, as the mother prays for her child's growth in every excellence and grace,—and what is true of the mother is equally true of the father,—the fashion of her mind and heart and soul is altered, is transfigured. It becomes a different, larger, fuller, deeper soul.

> "She means him well so earnestly,
> Unchanged in changing mood,
> Her life would go without a sigh
> To bring him something good."

But, if she does not bring the good to him, she brings it to herself. No one can cherish an ideal and devote himself to its realization from year to year, and strive and struggle and make sacrifices for its attainment, without undergoing a certain gracious transformation, of which the highest powers must be aware and men can hardly miss.

Turn any way we will, this law of spiritual transformation through constancy to an ideal has ample illustration. The greatest figure in all history, that of the mighty Nazarene,

furnishes his quota to the full amount. His personal ideal was that of the Messiah, the prophet and redeemer of his people. The criticism of Dr. Martineau has endeavored to relieve him of this imputation; and we might well be grateful to him, if, to cherish that ideal, Jesus had been obliged to cherish it in the popular way, in any one of the many popular ways that were pressed on his acceptance by the eager and impassioned time. But the Messianic ideal that he cherished was not the popular ideal, but his own personal ideal, as every prophet's had been before his day; and, therefore, I for one am glad that a more searching criticism than Dr. Martineau's permits us still to think of Jesus as cherishing the Messianic ideal and consciously realizing that ideal in his own personality. How could it be otherwise? With that great hope in the community and with that great aspiration in his heart, how could the two but marry? and how could their offspring be anything but the Messianic consciousness of Jesus? Lifting himself to the high level of his ever-greatening ideal of what that one would be who should redeem Israel, he rose into that stature which commands the centuries with the majesty of his great compassion and his perfect trust. And what that ideal did for him, his constancy conspiring with its exalted grace, he in his turn has done for thousands of his brother men. He has been their ideal of trust, of inwardness, of pure compassion for the most base and ruined lives. Beholding as in a glass his glory, they have been changed into the same image from glory to glory. "Beholding as in a glass!" In that striking phrase the great apostle builded better than he knew. For the ideal which in all ages, since he came, men have called "Christ" and "Jesus," has been very largely the reflection of their personal ideal of holiness and truth and love. They make the same tender and beautiful mistake that he made when he abandoned himself to what he conceived to be an objective Messianic ideal, which was in reality his own subjective ideal projected upon his imagination's radiant screen. But, as that lifted him into its height,

so the ideal which has for centuries borne his name has lifted millions into a region of more consecrated thought and will.

Happy are they who find their loftiest ideals embodied in the living substance of some man or woman who is transfigured for them in the golden light of love. The story that has touched me more than any other I have heard for a long time is that of the blessed girl who, when Dr. Lyman Abbott asked her, "Do you want to be like Christ?" made answer, "I want to be like my mother." O happy mother, to deserve that crown of praise! and happy child, with her ideal incarnate in warm breathing flesh beside her in the love-light of her home! But, however the ideal is made manifest, and by whatever name it is called,—father, mother, sister, brother, friend, lover, Jesus, Mary, Buddha, Brahma, God,—let us be glad that its compelling beauty ever rises on our hearts, ever soliciting our loyalty; and that, if we are not disobedient to the heavenly vision, some ray of it will be each day inwoven in the texture of our lives, to be a part of them forever.

"More than clouds of purple trail
In the gold of setting day,
More than gleams of wing or sail
Beckon from the sea-mist gray.

"Glimpses of immortal youth,
Gleams and glories seen and flown,
Far-heard voices sweet with truth,
Airs from viewless Eden blown.

"Guided thus, O friends of mine,
Let us walk our little way,
Knowing by each beckoning sign
That we are not quite astray."

UNITARIAN ADVANTAGES AND OBLIGATIONS.

I HAVE come to you this morning purposing to remind you once again of the advantages which you enjoy and the obligations that are laid upon you through your connection with the body of people called Unitarians. It is as clear as possible that such advantages as appertain to various other Christian bodies of a quite different constitution and numerical strength do not come within the range of our position. The vast and splendid, if sometimes tarnished, tradition of the Roman Catholic Church is not for us, nor its immense political influence, from which, apparently, nothing has been abated by the declension of the temporal power of the papacy. Witness the manner in which it is crushing into serviceable shape the French Republic, with which only a few years ago it made a hollow truce. Not for us, either, are the imposing ritual of the Episcopal Church and its thriving business of putting the newest wine into bottles gray with the dust and cobwebs of a venerable antiquity. Equally unavailable for us are such advantages as are not separable from the magnificent and efficient organization of the Presbyterian Church, or that of the Methodist,— an ecclesiasticism as arbitrary and intolerant as that of Rome herself, and as paralyzing to individual initiative of any kind. And, though the perfect independency of our congregational methods answers as face to face in water to that of the great Baptist conglomeration of parochial autonomies, the mass of that conglomeration is antipodal to our numerical weakness; and utterly impossible for us is the effectiveness with which that mass is brought to bear upon the individual, to crowd him

out or crush him if he presumes to try his fortunes "after the way that some call heresy."

Yet, though our Unitarian churches and our Unitarian people have not the advantages of the great religious bodies which divide and rule the whole body of Christian believers, with the almost paltry exceptions of a few minor sects, they have, nevertheless, certain advantages which are not to be despised. They have in their simple congregational polity a system which assures the independence of the individual church from all external influence or control; and does this to a degree to which the churches nominally congregational, and those avowedly so, such as the Baptist, do not approximate to very closely.

That is one point that we have scored, and for another we have our emancipation from the miserable intellectual and moral bondage to that irrational and immoral system of belief which has crushed the intelligence and heart of countless millions of mankind. So used are we to different and better things that we forget the others and the worse which have the power no longer, if it was ever theirs, to paralyze or destroy our lives. One must measure these things, not by the dull ineptitude of soddened and incurious souls, but by the sensibility of those alive to real differences of thought. Here was a god of such inhuman cruelty that the most criminal of men might dare comparison with him. Here was a conception of humanity that excused its grossest ignorance and its most shameful faults. Here was a conception of salvation more gross in its materialism than any materialism of the philosophic schools, and more immoral in its terms than Jeffreys's horrible assize. Here was a conception of revelation which assumed, at once, the spiritual incapacity of man and the imbecility or malignity of the revealing God. Here was a conception of future punishment which made the nominal god a real devil, deserving well the everlasting pangs to which he had devoted all but a handful of the elect from the foundations of the world.

Immeasurable the advantage of being relieved from the

appalling weight of such a system of belief. Immeasurable should be the gratitude of men and women who have been thus delivered. But you will say, perhaps, that Unitarians have no monopoly of such deliverance, that

> "Most can raise the flowers now;
> For all have got the seed."

This, however, is a gross exaggeration. All have not got the seed, and few of those who have it can raise the flowers and fruit of an ideal Unitarian faith. We do not enjoy a monopoly of deliverance from the traditional theology which I have described in terms no more uncomplimentary than those of many who are still nominally orthodox, and wonder how anybody can suspect them of a tendency to Unitarian belief. There are hundreds of clergymen standing in orthodox pulpits who enjoy that deliverance. There are hundreds who enjoy it openly; and there are hundreds more who enjoy it in their secret thoughts, in the confidences of ministerial circles, in the privacy of friend with friend. It is positively refreshing nowadays to one of our Unitarian ministers, when he meets an orthodox minister and doesn't find him mushily agreeing with him at almost every point. But we deceive ourselves abominably if we imagine that the great ice-pack of the traditional belief of Christiandom shows any signs of being suddenly dissolved. Here and there some taller mind o'erlooks its prostrate fellows, as here and there in cloudy skies some star dispels the darkness; but it will be long before "the host is out to the despair of night," and all mankind alike are perfected in the knowledge of Unitarianism or any truly liberal faith.

So much for the advantage of our deliverance from the traditional system of theology. And notice, by the way, that we have a very real and great advantage over the most liberal of those who keep up a semi-detached connection with the conservative churches, in that our intellectual integrity and self-respect are not subjected to the constant strain of the endeavor to somehow square our actual belief with

the standards of orthodoxy expressed in this, that, or the other creed or catechism or confession, or in certain ritualistic forms, or in the theological temper of a particular historic church. Wonderful is the ingenuity displayed by those who, neither as yet quite "off with the old" nor quite "on with the new," feel themselves obliged to keep up some kind of *entente cordiale* between the two. How sad the waste of intellectual energy upon this barren field! If the same energy could be expended in a straightforward, fearless effort to see things as they are, and report them with unqualified sincerity, how much more full and splendid the vision of the truth would be! What a spectacle is that afforded by men who "know a hawk from a hand-saw" ordinarily without difficulty, but who are ready to contend for their theological identity in the most solemn manner! At the rate we are now going on, within the coming century — before it is half through — we shall have the pope's infallibility explained so ingeniously and plausibly that not to accept the dogma will appear the height of folly.

In the mean time it is, I hold, a very great advantage not to feel one's self obliged to square one's actual, sincere belief with any traditional creed or formulary whatsoever. The intellectual saving is immense. So, too, the saving of one's self-respect; for this stretching of our personal belief on a Procrustes bed, if, haply, we may somehow make it fit, is not a business which any one can go into without some conscious shame.

Closely allied with this advantage, there is another that deserves consideration. It is that we can freely realize our Unitarian doctrines and ideas, that we cannot realize them too efficiently for our satisfaction and delight, that we can maximize them, make the most of them. And how different all this is from the intellectual and moral attitude of the orthodox believer towards his system of belief! Did men ever realize it; *i.e.*, entertain it as a real system of belief? Did they ever actually believe such dreadful things of God and man and the hereafter? Sometimes, apparently. But,

in general, it is pretty certain that men could not have believed these things. If they had believed them, they would never have laughed, they would never have smiled, they would never have married and begotten children, thereby adding fuel to the everlasting flame. You know the threadbare story of young Channing's wonder at the people's cheerful manner after listening to a sermon that was simply horrible in its threatenings of future ill. The fact was the Newport gentry did not realize their Calvinism. If they had done so, they would not have found themselves in any laughing mood. Formerly, no doubt, some held the ancient doctrine as a reality. Catherine Beecher held it so, and went agonizing all her days over the eternal misery of her young lover who was not a professing Christian when he died. William Cowper believed that he was himself an object of eternal reprobation, and went crazy in the strength of that belief. But, in general, the realization of the traditional creed was weak, even when its formal acceptance was well-nigh universal. It is much weaker now; and there is a homely proverb which has a very obvious application to the religious situation, "The proof of the pudding is in the eating." Tito Melema, at that famous dinner in the Rucellai gardens, when the roast peacock was brought on in its feathers, toyed with it very prettily, and said fine things about it, but ate as little of it as possible. And in this manner the enlightened everywhere now treat the dish that Calvin serves. They say fine things about it, but precious little of it do they swallow.

And, surely, it is a very great advantage to have a body of opinions which does not require any such treatment, which, the more it is realized, the better. And surely, too, as Unitarians, we have such a body of opinions. We do not minimize, we maximize, our doctrine of the dignity of human nature. We make the most of it. And it is not otherwise with our ideas of reason as the final court to which all belief must come, and of character as more than creed, and of responsibility, not for the rightness, but for the rightfulness of our opinions. It is not otherwise with our doctrine of the

Fatherhood of God and the humanity of Jesus and the identification of the Holy Scriptures with all the good and true and beautiful things that ever have proceeded from the deep heart of man. We do not hide these lights under a measure, but set them high in shining sconces on the wall. We are not as the decayed gentlewoman who cried, "Matches! matches!" in such a feeble voice that nobody could hear her, and then rejoiced in her successful inefficiency. We believe, and therefore speak without hesitation or equivocation; and to have a body of belief which we can with joy and gladness so realize and so maximize is an advantage of which we might well be more conscious than we are, and for which our gratitude should be immense.

Another advantage of our Unitarian position is that it permits us to accept the new truth of science upon whatever line with freedom and cordiality, and to realize that to the fullest possible extent. It goes without the saying that much of this new truth of silence is now accepted widely in the most orthodox circles. But is it generally accepted as something that *must* be accepted, not as something that may be accepted joyfully. It is accepted apologetically. Moreover it is only accepted after the exhaustion of every possible device for bringing it into discredit. No one can honestly compare our Unitarian attitude towards such new truths as those of Darwin and Spencer with that of the orthodox churches and not confess that we were in the van to welcome them while they, slowly and grudgingly, brought up the rear. I have been reading recently an article on the Old Testament prophecies and their New Testament fulfilments written by a distinguished Oxford scholar. It is sound and good, and there is a courageous note about it as if the writer were consciously doing something fine and brave; but my dear old teacher, Dr. Noyes, did the same thing in 1834, and, if he was not prosecuted for heresy, it was not because the attorney-general did not do his best to bring about a prosecution. It is a simple fact that the whole body of recent science has had for us a genial and inviting aspect, while it has had for

our orthodox friends a forbidding and repellent one. For us it has been a new revelation; while for them it has been something to be measured by the old revelation, and accepted or rejected according as it can be harmonized with the revelation contained in the Old and New Testaments. The most conspicuous of our liberal orthodox preachers has recently issued a pronunciamento to the effect that all religious teaching must stand or fall according as it does or does not come into agreement with the teachings of the New Testament. Such a position is fundamentally as far from that of the free intellect as that of those who make their appeal to the Westminster Confession.

Another great advantage — and it is not entirely incommensurate with that of which we have just spoken — is that we have the stars of literature and science fighting upon our side. It is science which has made impossible the conception of the Bible as an inerrant or supernatural book, and reduced it — if we should not say exalted it — to a human level. It is science that has eliminated miracle from history by assuring us that every fact that does not fall into some generalization — *i.e.*, some law already formulated — simply demands a wider formula, a more comprehensive law. As for literature, what comfort have the orthodox believers got from any of the great modern writers, poets, novelists? If these have not brought a deliberate aggressive criticism to the traditional scheme, they have at least been conspicuously silent in regard to it. The most orthodox of them — Wordsworth and Mrs. Browning — have never had the smell of orthodox hell-fire upon their garments nor the stain of sacrificial blood. Here in America the most orthodox of our poets — Whittier — has done more to shame the frowardness of the traditional theology than Bryant, Longfellow, Lowell, Emerson, and Holmes, all frankly Unitarian, though these, too, have done well, Stedman working grandly in the same direction, and Whitman's genius fairly bursting with the new and higher thought of God as no external mechanician, but an indwelling life, whose plastic stress shapes

all things from within. As with the poets, so with the novelists. What faintest echoes of the Westminster Confession in Thackeray, in George Eliot, in Dickens? With rare exceptions, the whole body of modern literature presupposes the inadequacy of the traditional dogmas and their superannuation, while at the same time, the more effectively because unconsciously, it pleads for the Unitarian goodness of God and the dignity of human nature and salvation by character and perpetual revelation and eternal hope. And in this alliance of science and literature with our Unitarian thought we have an advantage which we cannot prize too much. For it is the novels and the poems much more than the sermons and the theological discussions of the times that are shaping the opinions and beliefs and conduct of the rising generation. Varying a familiar quotation, it might well be said, "Let me write the literature of a people and I do not care who writes its theology."

I have spoken of the negative advantage of our deliverance from the burden of the traditional theology, with its intolerable thought of God, its dishonorable thought of man, its narrow view of inspiration, and its materialistic magic of salvation, and, worst of all, its awful doom for the majority, and its selfish hope for the few arbitrarily elect. But it is not as if, over against these thoughts and views, we had not others bright as they are dark, encouraging as they are hopeless and depressing, to have which is a very positive advantage. We have not made a wilderness, and called it peace. It blossoms for us like the rose. We have a thought of God grand enough to tally with the grander universe which science has disclosed; a thought of man large enough to include Jesus as one of countless, happy illustrations; a thought of incarnation which is not exhausted by a single glorious individual, but is inclusive of such men as William the Silent, Washington, and Lincoln, such women as we know, thank God, and call by dear, familiar names; a thought of revelation which for the book of Esther substitutes "In Memoriam," and for Ecclesiastes "Rabbi Ben Ezra," and for the

fiercest imprecatory Psalm the tenderest things of Whittier, "The Eternal Goodness," and many another of its kind. We have, too, a thought of atonement which adds the sufferings of many to the sufferings which Jesus bore upon his bitter cross,— a thought of salvation by the blood of all who have willingly laid down their lives for justice and humanity, a thought of heaven which comes to us assured by our ideal of infinite justice, and by the aspirations of our minds, our hearts, our consciences, for their appropriate objects, truth and love and righteousness. We would not think that those who do not go our way have none of these high thoughts. But how can it be but that they should have them confusedly, if they must do some reverence still to that body of doctrine which has come down to them in the creeds and catechisms and confessions which good but terribly mistaken men forged in the raging heat of martyr fires that they had kindled to destroy their fellow-beings, who could not quite accept their thoughts of the eternal mysteries? And how can we be too grateful for the advantage of holding such great thoughts as are indisputably ours,— thoughts at the same time so noble and so exigent,— and for the privilege of holding them unconfused by any miserable necessity of adjusting them to others of a radically different character?

Such being some of the more obvious advantages of our Unitarian position and belief, what are the corresponding obligations which they entail? That we can have advantages without corresponding obligations is an imagination too absurd to deserve a moment's consideration. The world is not made on that plan. The motto of the old French nobility, *Noblesse oblige*,— Nobility demands,— is true of all nobility, of all enjoyment of superior advantages. The doctrine is at least as old as the New Testament: "From him to whom much is given, much shall be required." On the very threshold of this consideration we are met by those who assure us that our Unitarian occupation is already gone. Those who bring to us this assurance are a motley crew. Some of them are members of our own household of faith; and others wear

habiliments which were once "Presbyterian true blue," but are much faded now, or such as habitually distinguish the Congregationalists or Episcopalians. Our occupation is gone, they tell us, because our doctrines and ideas have taken root and grown so vigorously in the other ecclesiastical enclosures. We must attend somewhat carefully to this. The spread of our characteristic doctrines and ideas is a fact of great significance. It is a fact which goes far to account for our numerical inferiority. We have recently been taunted with this, as if it were a sign that we were not successfully competing with the other sects.

We are not, if success is to be measured by numerical aggregation. But is it not a fact that the other churches generally grow just in proportion as they approximate to our ideas and beliefs? If we try to pin down an orthodox friend to the traditional doctrines, is he not very apt to say, "Why, I don't believe those things any more than you do." I have met devout attendants on an elaborate liturgical worship who have wondered at my fogyism in theology in comparison with their own radical advance. The recommendation of an orthodox minister to Unitarians is not infrequently: "He is just as liberal as any of your ministers. He doesn't believe any of the old orthodox things." And, where you find the liberal orthodox preacher deprecating any suggestion that he is getting to be Unitarian, you are reminded of Mr. Clemens's touch of humor when he said: "A few years ago I seemed to be getting old and rheumatic. But all that is over now. I *am* old and rheumatic." They are not getting Unitarian because they are Unitarian,—these liberal orthodox preachers, in many instances. In some cases they would have been regarded as heretical, tried by the standards of the Unitarian orthodoxy of fifty years ago. But let the doctrines that were preached in the orthodox churches fifty years ago be preached in them now, and their doors would not be wide enough for the congregations to surge out of into the free air of heaven. The windows would be used for exits, even though they were glazed with Tiffany's most lovely glass. The angels' wings would not resist the press.

All this is very plain. Look at the new Polychrome Bible, and see how its list of editors embraces scholars of every Protestant sect; and there is no good reason why it should not have embraced Roman Catholics also. At a recent Roman Catholic conference critical papers were read fully abreast of the higher criticism of Kuenen and Wellhausen. Dr. McGiffert of the Union Theological Seminary brings to the New Testament a more radical and disintegrating criticism than that of Ernest Renan. More than one-quarter of the whole body of our Unitarian ministers have come to us from the orthodox churches, where, if they had taken the comfortable advice that has been given them, they might have remained to preach their Unitarian sermons to grateful and enthusiastic congregations. Seeing that these things are so, it does not seem at all strange that many Unitarians, and many others, think our Unitarian occupation gone.

> "Why labor at the dull, mechanic oar,
> When the fresh breeze is blowing
> And the strong current flowing
> Right onward to the eternal shore?"

And it is quite within the bounds of possibility that there may come a time, and that soon, when the Unitarian occupation will be gone, drowned in the general flood of liberal opinions, the general liberalization of the sects,

> "As morning drinks the morning star."

But that time has not come yet. It will not come so long as liberal orthodoxy is at so much pains as at present to discredit our Unitarian position and our Unitarian thought, so much enamoured of the spirit formulated in the Latin saying, "Damned be those who have said our good things before us." Such anticipation is the one thing our liberal orthodoxy cannot tolerate, cannot forgive. But we believe in loyalty to our traditions. The Unitarian movement has done great things for us, whereof we are glad. We cannot exaggerate our debt to Channing and Parker and Emerson and

Hedge and Martineau; and until there is some other communion that is large enough to include them in its fold, and brave enough to do them rightful honor, without misrepresenting their opinions or their spirit, we must even do as Dante did, and make a party by ourselves.

Not only so, but our advantages will lay on us the obligation to do all that we can to make the Unitarian denomination more vigorous in the future than it ever has been in the past, and to spread abroad its doctrines as they have never yet been spread. We owe this to the beauty and the glory of our faith; and we owe it to the fidelity of those who, fighting against such odds as we have never known, planted their banner well inside the enemy's lines, and kept it from all stain. That ours is one of the smallest of the sects should not abate our courage nor diminish our regard. "She is a little college, but we love her," Webster said of Dartmouth, his own Alma Mater. "Were not Unitarians few and despised," said Channing, "I would not be a Unitarian." Defect of size has never yet, in churches or in states, debarred them from men's passionate affection. Judea, Greece, and England, "compassed by the inviolate sea," are proof enough of this. Moreover, if Unitarianism has been numerically weak, it has been strong in intellectual force and moral consecration. It has been great in personality, in leadership, in culture, in ideas, in sympathy with science and reform.

But, while I should be enumerating our obligations, I am merely adding to the list of our advantages. No matter. Our advantages are obligations. And these can all be summed up in one,— the obligation to make ourselves worthy of the calling wherein we are called, worthy of the Unitarian tradition and the Unitarian faith. To do this, it is not enough that we deny the truth of what good men have believed in past times, and still believe with various degrees of modification and sincerity. There are Unitarians innumerable who, having done this, think they have done all; and they have not learned the A, B, C, of Unitarian religion. There are people in all the orthodox churches the latchets of whose shoes they

are not worthy to unloose, because somehow their irrational opinions do not prevent them from having a genuine ethical passion and a lovely spiritual experience. These are the indispensable things; and, compared with them, the most brilliant intellectual radicalism is dust and chaff. Thank heaven, there is nothing in the essential nature of Unitarianism to preclude their presence and their power. And the one obligation laid upon us is, however extensive our intellectual range, to make it as intensive as may be, to realize in deed and life its spiritual possibilities, making our daily walk and conversation such as they should be to be accordant with such doctrines as we hold concerning God and man and all their wonderful affiliations with each other and the universal world.

There is one aspect of our own history that is full of encouragement. There was a time when a good part of all our Unitarian energy was wasted in the vain endeavor to prove ourselves as orthodox as we had ever been. That was our silly period; and, because we cannot now regard it without shame, we cannot bear to see our liberal orthodox friends doing the very things that we did formerly. But, because that period of unreality did not long persist with us, we are confident that it will not long persist with our orthodox friends; and we are impatient, for their sakes, to have them enter into that estate of freedom which we so much enjoy. We do not all enjoy it as we might and should. There are many Unitarians who disguise their real thought in "damaged phraseology"; many who do not shape their expression on their real thought with absolute sincerity. We confess these things with shame, and hope to better them.

I must confess that, when I think of all that Unitarianism means, of the splendor of its intellectual and ethical tradition, of its glorious principles, and its grand conceptions of the world, humanity, and God, of the great names and high examples that have adorned its history, I often wonder that there are not a greater number of persons, even in this noisy, superficial time, who are irresistibly and irrevocably drawn

to place their time, their money, and, what is needed most, their lives, at its service. If we could have a consecration and devotion equal to the splendor of our ideas and the significance of our history, we should have a hundred churches where we have but one; and every one of them would have its throng of joyful worshippers. Did you ever hear of Hippocleides, the Corinthian youth who danced upon his head upon the table at a great dinner, and upon being expostulated with by his host, whose daughter he was about to marry, answered, "Hippocleides doesn't care"? Now, do you know, I think that many of our Unitarian people and our Unitarian churches ought to take that Hippocleides for their patron saint? Why, but because they do not care? It is nothing, or next to nothing, to them what becomes of the Unitarian body or the Unitarian faith. If they have any time or money left, after attending to every selfish pleasure, they may give a little of the one or of the other or of both to further our denominational interests or those of a particular church. But not until the last are first and the first last will these interests be paramount in their consideration or approximate to such a height. And what business or art or work of any kind would thrive when treated in this fashion? That more of our churches do not vanish into thin air is simply owing to the indomitable persistence of a few tried and faithful souls, whose spirit made unanimous would make such a difference in the Unitarian body as the warm body of the earth will know between this barrenness of the winter's end and the full tide of June's delicious green with every rose abloom.

THE DIVINE EXAMPLE.

My starting-point is that passage in the Sermon on the Mount in which Jesus holds up the conduct of his heavenly Father as an example to his disciples. Do so and so, he says, that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. "Be ye therefore perfect," he concludes, "even as your heavenly Father is perfect." There are not many texts in the New Testament that have been so much abused as this, so much misunderstood. I have heard it quoted hundreds of times, and almost never with the meaning that it has as it stands in the fifth chapter of Matthew, forty-eighth verse. As it stands there, it has no such meaning as is commonly attached to it; namely, that man can be and should be an imitator of the divine perfection, considered in its total manifestation, at least upon the moral side. Some have contended that we have here a flying goal, an ideal impossible to realize, but nevertheless one forever lifting us to heights of more complete attainment; while others have contended that the goal can be attained, that man can be morally perfect even within the limits of this present life. We have had not only individuals here and there, but great bodies of believers, calling themselves Perfectionists, holding to this form of thought. Some of them have contended for a perfection coëxtensive with that of God; and others have said: "To be perfect as God is perfect is to be perfect according to the measure of our being. He is perfect as God. We must be perfect as men." Now it is not to be doubted that, whichever of these lines has been adopted by sincere and earnest men and

women, great good has been the general result. Here and there a man, imagining himself to be already perfect, has been a melancholy spectacle. From first to last there have been many such. But the majority have said in heart and mind, "Not as if I had already attained," while still pressing onward in the spirit of the immortal poet when he sings:—

> "Profounder, profounder, man's spirit must dive;
> To his aye-rolling orbit no goal can arrive.
> The heavens that now draw him with sweetness untold
> Once found, for new heavens he spurneth the old."

We can find no better exhibition of this method than in Dr. Channing's preaching. The imitableness of the divine character was one of the most fruitful and inspiring of those glorious themes which ever had for him a supreme attraction. And what was the perfection of God as he beheld it in clear dream and solemn vision, as he made it shine before the eyes of those who listened to his solemn and impressive speech? It was simply the impersonation of his own moral ideal; and, being that, it was an object worthy of all admiration and desire. Be sure he never fancied that he had already attained or imagined that any one else could so fancy with good warrant. It is of the very essence of the moral ideal to recede as we draw nigh to it, to enlarge as we embody it in thought and deed.

Be ye therefore perfect even as the moral ideal is perfect. When we consider in what strange directions Christian thought has sometimes gone, it would appear that we have here a safer and more excellent injunction than the New Testament one which it imperfectly translates. For see: John Stuart Mill said he would call no being good who was not what he meant when he applied that word to his fellow-creatures; but not all the Christian theologians have been persuaded that this way of thinking is the best. A being has been called good and called God and called by many tender and endearing names, whom we should never think of

calling good, were he a fellow-creature doing the things this being is supposed to do. My friend Gannett has said, in a great discourse upon the incarnation, that one good thing about the identification of Jesus with God was that after that identification men were bound to think of God as at least as good as Jesus. And this is true of God the Son of course, but not of God the Father. They have thought of God the Father as doing things no decent man could do, much less the man of Nazareth. And that is why the wide-spread, century-lasting substitution of Jesus for God as an object of love and worship has not been anything like so terrible a thing as our Unitarian people have commonly imagined it to be. For it is the realities men love and worship, not the names they call them by, that are the important matter. Of course, it is a dreadful thing for men to give the name of God, the name which should express their loftiest ideal, to an imaginary being who does not do this. But it would be much more dreadful if they really loved and worshipped this being than it is for them to love and worship their ideal of goodness, truth, and love, calling it by the name of Jesus.

Called by whatever name, let us be glad that for so many thousands in all ages the moral ideal, the ideal of perfection ever brightening and expanding, has been the object of their worship, the pattern seen in the mount to which they have endeavored to conform the fashion of their lives. But what we have here of high thought and holy purpose is not what we have in the New Testament, where Jesus says, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." This is so evident that the persistency with which the passage has been misinterpreted is most remarkable. The context makes the meaning plain as that of any text in the New Testament or Old, and yet this evident meaning has been persistently neglected or ignored. Take the text and the context together, and there is no suggestion that the divine example we are bade to follow is God's general perfection as a moral being. We read, "Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you, that ye may be the children of your

Father who is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. . . . Be ye therefore perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." The idea is not general, but particular. The divine example proffered is not the general perfection of the Almighty, but his particular conduct in being good to all. Grant that we have not here so high a thought as that which has been habitually imposed upon the text. It is, nevertheless, the thought which Jesus had in mind, the veracity of the report being provisionally assumed. It is a thought exclusive of special providence in the sphere of meteorology. In another passage, that relating to the tower of Siloam, Jesus appears to advocate the doctrine of special providence. The tower fell, and many lives were lost; and Jesus says, "Unless ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." How reconcile the two passages? I am sure I do not know. Perhaps one of them is a distortion. Perhaps Jesus was not perfectly consistent in his utterances. There is not the slightest reason for believing that he was. But what is certain is that here he says, or is represented as saying, that God treats the good and bad with equal kindness, giving them impartially his sun and rain, and that here we have a divine example which we should do well to follow. This limited significance is all that we can properly attach to his "counsel of perfection,"—"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Be sure, I pray you, that my business here this morning is not the explication of a doubtful text. The text is not in the least doubtful. But that is neither here nor there. My business is to do exactly what Jesus did according to what seems to me the perfectly simple and obvious meaning of the narration. The habitual misinterpretation is no less a splendid and inspiring thought because it is a misinterpretation. I bid you cleave to that. Love, worship, serve, your loftiest ideal of perfection, assured that God's perfection is more lofty far. But what concerns us now is the divine example as expressed in the benignant sun and the refresh-

ing rain. Their blessings are for all alike, the evil and the good. The thought of Jesus was that we should imitate this divine impartiality. Are we prepared to say that he was right, and to put his idea into practice in the habitual conduct of our lives? Let us address ourselves to this question with all possible seriousness and earnestness.

The superficial aspect of society does not, it must be confessed, seem to express any sympathy with the method of Jesus, residing at the heart of it, any confidence in the validity of the divine example as he found it in the impartiality of the sun and rain. Our penal codes, our prison discipline, our social penalties for the infringement of the unwritten social laws, our personal dealings with the people who have mistreated us or withheld from us our due consideration or esteem,— such things as these through a wide range of fault and punishment suggest that the divine example does not appeal to us as one that can be safely followed. Does the wise parent treat with equal generosity his obedient and thoughtful and his disobedient and thankless child? Does the wise public yield an equal honor to its noblest citizens and the most reprobate? Does the wise employer pay the same wages to the indolent and careless workman as to the most industrious and efficient? Questions of this sort might be indefinitely multiplied. And, mind you, I have asked, "Does the *wise* parent, public, or employer do thus and so?" For the parent, public, or employer is not always wise. As we look abroad upon society, we do not find men in their several stations practising a wise discrimination. The political community certainly does not discriminate very carefully in its awards of irresponsible authority or public trust. If anything, the sun of its approval shines more pleasantly upon the men of doubtful reputation than upon the men of spotless character. The Roman emperor, who proposed to make his horse a consul, was the prototype of many a modern boss or ring when the coast is tolerably clear. Let the supremacy of this or that party be endangered, and you will get a decent candidate

and an outburst of moral sentiment which a good many will mistake for the trumpet-blast of the millennial dawn. In reality there is much in it of that hypocrisy which is the homage which vice pays to virtue. Each tidal wave, so called, brings many pirates into port to ravage honest men. The prospect of an easy victory is always a signal for the politicians to put their worst men at the fore. And still the question, "Does the *wise* public yield an equal honor to its noblest citizens and the most reprobate?" waits for a reply. The unwise public may prefer to honor most the least deserving; but the wise public will observe the maxim of old time, which reads, "Honor to whom honor is due." The tendency of labor-combination is to equalize the rewards of labor, good and poor, and so put a premium upon indifferent and defective work. But it is not the part of wisdom to do this, and one who knows whereof he speaks assures me that there is a gradual secession from the labor unions going on of men who wish to have their pay assigned according to their work.

A vicious trait of all discussion of political and social matters is the exaggeration of exceptional conditions and events, and such exaggeration must not affect us here to the discredit of the bottom facts of our political and social life. Our political communities may be impartial in the distribution of their favors or prefer the baser sort. Our best society may sometimes and frequently accord a gilded knave its adulation and refrigerate its shoulder for the man of sterling honesty whose fortune is but small. But such things, albeit much abounding, are exceptions, not the rule of our political and social life; and, therefore, it would seem (for the by-path which I have been following comes back to the main road of my discourse),—and, therefore, it would seem that our political and our social life rejects the divine example of the impartial sun and rain as not being a valid one for our habitual following.

This is the superficial aspect. Is it the interior and fundamental meaning of the situation? Does being good

to all mean treating all alike? "Analogies," said Whately, "do not go upon all fours." The divine example which Jesus held aloft to his disciples was not that of equal gifts for all, but of equal good to all. Surely, he did not himself conceive that the evil and the good are to be treated just alike. Surely, at any rate, he did not treat them so. He said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." He also said: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! How can you escape the damnation of hell?"

I cannot but believe that those maledictions were no mere "heat lightning," as we call it, but good, honest thunderbolts that went shattering to their mark. That did not mean he did not love the scribes and Pharisees. He did not like their faults. There was no infringement of the divine example in those hot and scalding words.

As here, so everywhere. If our ideal is the Eternal Goodness, goodness to all alike, there must be resolute determination to discriminate the evil and the good, and to adapt our conduct to the end we have in view. Our penal legislation must sometimes be stern in love's great name, or it may do the criminal more harm than good. It will not do to make the prison more attractive than the workshop and the home. If you do that, your criminals may think that their best card is to continue in sin, that grace may abound. Social indulgence to the libertine is a *carte blanche* for his pursuance of the primrose path of dalliance to its intolerable end. To send men to Congress who should be sent to the State's prison is truly kind neither to them nor to the common weal. Some sternness is not inconsistent with the heartiest good will. Under the Solomonic dispensation — Spare the rod, and spoil the children — there was apparently as much parental affection and as much filial obedience and regard as there is now. To be weakly sentimental is not to be timely wise. The smarting flesh is nothing to a callous fault. Corporal punishment in our public schools should doubtless be prohibited, it is so easily abused by men with brutal

inclinations. But many of the wisest think that there is loss as well as gain in such a prohibition. How many young barbarians, they say, of Winchester and Eton, Rugby and Harrow, grown to manhood and to splendid service upon flood or field, have blessed the master's rod that blossomed, even as Aaron's, but with a double flower, here an o'er-mastered fault and there the nerve that does not flinch at pain! I shall not be surprised if some of you decline to go a step with me along this dolorous way. And I hold back from it myself. I know what dangers lurk in ambush here for the unwary traveller. The beloved teacher of my early youth was very sparing of the rod; but, when he did resort to it, the event was memorable, both for the sufferer and for the lookers-on. The master meant the culprit well, but I find myself wondering if he did not brutalize him more than he benefited him. It is a fact that the boys who were the central figures of those dread ordeals almost without exception came to grief. I know, for they have sought me out from time to time — "alas for God's image!" — poor wrecks and shadows of humanity, pitiful in their humiliation, who were once so stout of heart.

The danger of all sternness and severity in our dealing with the faults and crimes of human beings is that we do more to imbrute their nature than to redeem or soften it. What love can do to soften and redeem is taught with terrible impressiveness by the operation of the opposing elements. There could hardly be a more penetrating judgment than that of Mrs. Browning, where she says of the East London folk that they must be most miserable to be so cruel. A book I have been reading recently brings to this doctrine a great wealth of painful confirmation. Its subject is "Jewish Life in the Middle Ages." It is a mistake to suppose that the Jews suffered equally at the hands of the Christians from century to century all the way along. The earlier centuries were comparatively free from Christian hatred of the Jews. The Ghetto, with its monstrous overcrowding of some narrow precinct of this or that great city,— this was an after-

thought. And all that is most selfish, unattractive, or repulsive in the Jewish character, as it is apprehended by the modern world, is the product of the Ghetto, and, in general, of the system of repression and exclusion of which the Ghetto was the dark and noisome poison-flower. The only wonder is that so much cruelty did not more imbrute the victims whom it maimed and battered and despoiled.

The same wonder takes possession of us when we recall the marvellous record made by the slave people of the South during the Civil War. The white people went up to the great battle to the end that they might rivet firmer and forever the shackles of the blacks, and left these in charge of their plantations, their houses and their fields, their wives and children. What sublime assurance! Yet was it justified by the event. As a distinguished Southerner has said, "A hundred torches in the rear of the Southern armies would have paralyzed them instantly; but not one was lighted." How so, if cruelty is as demoralizing, as brutalizing, as we commonly believe? And there was cruelty in abundance. Mrs. Stowe did not exceed in this respect in "Uncle Tom's Cabin." A dozen years before the building of that cabin, Theodore D. Weld had made a compilation which more than justified her sternest allegations. But she also painted a St. Clair, a master of the kindest heart; and there is no other explanation possible of the conduct of the slave people in war-time than that the St. Clairs were many, that cruelty was the exception, and kindness was the rule. There could be no better testimony to the average character of the slaveholder than the trust he put in Uncle Tom and Sambo and the rest when he went forth to battle, and the divinely beautiful and sacred way in which they answered to that trust. Agnes Repplier has recently been saying that till she read "Uncle Tom's Cabin" she thought slavery horrible. But that *that* convinced her that, to produce such characters as St. Clair and George Harris and the rest of Mrs. Stowe's angelic choir, it must, of all human institutions, be the most improving to humanity. Alas! there was,

as I have said, another side not absent from Mrs. Stowe's account, by any means; and the fruits of its brutality and degradation are ripening even now in Southern outrages which provoke others of as dark a dye and deserving equal punishment. Both sides of Mrs. Stowe's great story teach the same lesson. It is a poor rule that will not work both ways. The debasement and the hardening that persistent cruelty entails mean nothing if they do not mean that goodness, kindness, tenderness, consideration, are as potent on their side. If these do not achieve their end, it is because they are not so kind, so tender, so considerate, as they might be, and so persistent in their kindness, tenderness, consideration.

"There's nothing in the world I know
That can escape from love;
For every depth it goes below,
And every height above.
It waits as waits the sky
Until the clouds go by,
Alike when they are gone
And when they stay.
Implacable is love:
Foes may be bought
Or teased from their intent;
But he goes unappeased,
Who is on kindness bent."

And the more unappeasable it is, the more victorious. Our scientific charity is doing much; most where a human heart is beating fast and warm at the centre of its administration, as in our own Bureau of Charities. For the most perfect organization cannot dispense with personal devotion to the objects of its care, and cannot do a tithe of all the social service that our social state demands. Our best reliance still must ever be on the unorganized fidelity of men and women who, in the ordinary natural relations of their lives, never miss an opportunity for taking the purely human attitude toward the unfortunate and miserable from whatever cause. I have a boundless confidence in the effi-

ciency of kindness, strong, simple, and persistent kindness, to redeem the evil from their evil ways.

> "A bad man, like a leaky tub,
> May waste his helps to right:
> But largely pour thy generous gifts,
> How soon a crack soaks tight!"

I have read volumes of political economy and social science which do not contain so much wisdom as these homely lines. Our penologists should engrave them on their hearts. I sometimes think we should do better if we held all crime to be disease (the most of it is that), and treated it accordingly. But one thing is sure: that, however daring love may be in its severity, the love must be so stoutly at the fore that there will be no mistake about it. Time was when all our criminal procedure was of the nature of revenge. But now it has a double purpose, the safety of society and the reclamation of the offender, the making of a man out of a foolish brute or brutish fool; and more and more the former of these ends is seen to be involved in the latter, and to be secured in the degree that we secure the personal salvation. Love is the fulfilling of the law. As Jacob wrestling in the dark with the good angel cried, "I will not let thee go unless thou bless me," so we must cry, and with implacable resolve, to the good angel in man's heart that is so hidden from us by the darkness of his shame and sin. It was a great victory for Bronson Alcott's faith in human nature when he gave a tramp his last ten-dollar bill, hoping to get it back, and *did!* Do you say no tramp could take advantage of such a fool as that? You may; but I prefer to think that something in the heart of that poor fellow responded to the confidence that was so sweetly tendered him, and that that something lurks in thousands of poor battered hulks which once upon a time made holiday for happy hearts, new launched upon the seas of God.

And so my word is this: Put as much love as you can into all your dealings with each other, into all your dealings with

your fellow-men. No matter if you cannot see at once the seed you plant breaking the hardened soil. Cast your bread upon the waters, and it shall return to you after many days. How useless, oftentimes, seems the good father's tender love, the mother's holy trust, so meagrely the wayward or the thoughtless child responds!

> "They mean him well so earnestly,
> Unchanged in changing mood;
> Their life would go without a sigh
> To bring him something good."

But, as Emerson has written, "The years teach much which the days never know." The loving-kindness which the thoughtless heart of youth takes thanklessly or flings aside may in some after-time, transformed into a dear and sacred memory, make its invincible appeal to the poor jaded heart of the long-wandering prodigal, and bring him safely home.

There is no aspect of our personal and social life which does not afford some confirmation of the claim I make for the validity of the divine example, the overmastering power of love. And if it be true, which I do not believe, that our social troubles have but just begun, and there awaits us in the near future a great industrial catastrophe, our best reliance for a safe deliverance from that event is on this same spirit of humanity, which is not content with even-handed justice in its social dealings, but to justice adds compassion, and to compassion generosity, and to generosity the glowing heart of sympathetic, brotherly affection that transcends all social differences, and breaks every social barrier down.

And, because I have so much confidence in the validity of the divine example, I have an equal confidence in the Eternal Goodness.

> "Do I find love so full in my nature,
> God's ultimate gift,
> That I doubt his own love can compete with it?
> Here the parts shift?
> Here the creature surpass the Creator,
> The end what began?"

What miserably inverted logic that would be! No, no! the stream cannot rise higher than the fountain. Our love cannot outshine the love of the eternal God. His love, like ours, may dare the sternest dealing in pursuance of its glorious ends, if haply so, his tenderness abused, our "weariness may toss us to his breast." But, soon or late, whatever sternest disciplines or most genial satisfactions may best serve his ends. I dare believe that the Eternal Goodness will so work and strive that he will weary out at length all hatred and all cruelty and all oppression, all bitterness and strife and wrong, and bring even his most rebellious children into the peace and comfort and the strong embracing of the everlasting arms.

WRESTLING WITH GOD

THE story of Jacob's wrestling with God is one of the best known stories of the Old Testament. It has furnished the rhetoric of prayer with one of its most striking metaphors,— a metaphor which has been often much abused, the agonized petition being figured in the terms of a tremendous physical encounter, in which God gets the worst of it. And not infrequently the figure has been varied, and the antagonist of God has been represented as a pugilist, and as pommelling him well, and so compelling him to give the desired "answer to prayer," the blessing sought. In this kind of talk no one has exceeded Luther, who said, describing his own wrestling with God for the recovery of his friend Melanchthon: "Then and there I made our Lord God to smart for it; for I threw him down the sack before the door, and rubbed his ears with all his promises of hearing prayer which I knew how to recapitulate from Holy Writ, so that he could not but hear me if I was ever again to place any reliance on his promises."

Here is a very different conception of prayer from that of Jesus when he said: "Your heavenly Father knoweth what you have need of before you ask him. Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Yet at another time he told the story of the man coming at midnight, who would have three loaves, and who got them because of his importunity. And the "wrestling in prayer" has only been a daring metaphor to express this idea,— the expression often gross, but forcible enough to be apprehended, where a more moderate form of

speech might vanish into thin air, and make no impression on the ear or heart. And shall we not say that there is quite as much truth, if not more, in the wrestling metaphor, and in the persistency of the man whom Robert Collyer calls "the feller who would have three loaves" as in the more genial doctrine, "Ask, and it shall be given you"? However it may be with men's merely verbal prayers, with those more real prayers which are compact of the energy, the devotion, and the passion of their lives, is it not true that many of the things that are of highest worth come to us only as the reward of long endeavor, of persistent struggle with the opposing forces of the world? Some things are true, but other things are also true. Those who proclaim the gospel of a wise passiveness proclaim much that is true. But it is not the whole truth. We often strive and fret, when patient waiting is the only sign by which we can conquer and possess. But "the battle of life" is a figure of speech which has had too wide a currency to be set aside as not standing for something very real in our experience. "It does seem," says Professor James, "to be a real fight." I know not "seems," it is. And, the sooner we make up our minds to this, the better; and the less likely we shall be to make life harder for our comrades and our friends, when we should be doing something to lift up the hands that hang down and confirm the feeble knees.

The history of discovery and invention,— what is it but the story of men's resolute persistency, their patient struggle with the elements of the problem they have set out to solve. Did the falling apple drop into Newton's hand, and there at once figure to him, rounded and complete, that theory of the attraction of gravitation which in the book-keeping of science stands credited against his name? Quite otherwise the fact. The falling apple only had that germination and fruition because it fell into a mind prepared for its reception by long days of patient search; and other days and nights succeeded the dramatic moment before there came that

vision of the truth which caused Newton, as he tells us, "a great trembling of the heart." And what was true in this particular instance has been true in every other where great scientific truths or principles have been discovered, and great secrets of the natural world laid bare. It is true that somewhere in the course of the investigation there has often been that dramatic moment on which the popular mind fixes its attention with exclusive interest. But this has generally been the merest incident of a process of prolonged duration. "Patience is genius," says the proverb; but the saying would be truer turned about so as to read, "Genius is patience." It is the power of holding out and holding on. "It's dogged as does it," as the man in Trollope's story said to the poor curate ploughing his gloomy way along the country lanes. And it is the genius of the man that makes the doggedness. The very essence of the genius is in this doggedness, this "gift of continuance," as Grant's father called it in his son, this bull-dog grip which never will let go. Not only in the great affairs of invention and discovery, but in the every-day affairs of business, success awaits the men who do not know when they are beaten,— like our brave men at Santiago, who, when they should have retreated, judged by every standard of the formal military tactician, kept right on, and did the work cut out for them by their superiors — in rank, but not in soul.

But I must be more parsimonious with my Old Testament story, and put it to a more proper and peculiar use, if I am going to justify myself at all in using it. There are other parables and fables in abundance that teach the lessons of patience and persistency. But the essence of the story of Jacob's wrestling with Jehovah is that he wrestled with a friendly power that masked itself in seeming enmity and opposition. And, essentially, the story is a parable of the good powers of God in nature and humanity that oppose our human wish and will, if, haply, through their opposition, they may be the benefactors of our lives. Our gen-

eralization here may easily be too broad. There are limits to the opposition that may be encountered with a good hope of overcoming it. Fool courage doesn't pay. We must attend to the teachings of experience and to the capacities of our own individuality. One's head, however thick, is not a good battering-ram, when a stone wall is to be broken down. Much of our fine imperialist talk imports that we shall proceed at once to colonize our tropical possessions. We shall make the attempt if we are foolish, not if we are wise and prudent. However we may hold and master and manage these new possessions, to attempt to colonize would be to attempt the impossible, and what is proved impossible by the experience of three hundred years. Nothing is surer in the field of political economy than that temperate-zone races cannot colonize the tropics. To make the attempt is to immolate thousands of foolhardy adventurers on an inhuman shrine. Temperate-zone people cannot colonize the tropics. They can rob and plunder them, as Spain has done with every colony that she has ever ruled and ruined. They can, at great risk and cost, hold them, as England holds India and Egypt and her crown colonies generally, with an iron military arm backing up a splendid civil administration. This is not colonization. It is mere military and commercial occupation, ranging through from such gross exploitation as that of Holland in the East Indies to such humanitarian and philanthropic oversight as that of England tends to be in India and Egypt, for all its incidents of terrible severity. But I am trenching upon matters which I am intending to treat hereafter in no incidental way. For the present I do but use them as an illustration of my principle that there is a very hopeless way in which men may be found fighting against God. Other countries have been fighting in the dark this battle of the temperate-zone colonist with tropical conditions. Now it is broad day, and the sun of experience rides high heaven; and the truth is so plain that a wayfaring man, though a Congressman, need

not err therein. It is that tropical countries, however held, cannot be colonized by people of the temperate zones.

Nevertheless, it is best to err upon the side of risk and daring than upon the side of pusillanimous hesitation, doubt, and fear. It is sometimes better to attempt the impossible than to do the easy thing which may be the most dangerous of all, as where the young man at Niagara invited Talleyrand to jump from the top of the precipice with him; and Talleyrand made answer: "Shall we not rather go down to the bottom, and jump up? That will be a much more distinguished feat." The only way of finding out whether some things can be done or not is to make the attempt. There are always prophets of discouragement, and even men who will prove to you that such and such things cannot be done, when they have been done already or are just about to be. You know the story of the man in the barber's chair, who insisted that the taxidermist who stuffed that owl there on his perch did not know his business. An owl never did and never could hold his head that way. All at once the owl turned his head. It was a live owl. And a live man will often miserably confute the doleful prophecies of the most learned critics and philosophers. The great Dr. Lardner proved conclusively that a steamship couldn't cross the Atlantic; and his weighty argument was brought over to this country by the "Great Western," the first steamship that made the passage. Our own Chancellor Livingston was equally confident that a steam locomotive was impossible. But there are several now in use. The neolithic mind survived the neolithic period. There are flourishing examples of it even in this enlightened age. Some of you have read about its earlier operation,* and will recognize its characteristic traits in much contemporary thought and speech. The cry is, "You would have to alter human nature if you do thus and so." And why not? It has been altered a good deal since the first man got upon

* In Charlotte Perkins Stetson's "In this our World," "Similar Cases."

his feet, and stood with port erect, his face toward heaven; and it will have to be altered a good deal more before we see the rosy flush of the millennial dawn.

How the beneficent forces of our life enmask themselves as hindrance and defect and opposition is shown by the experience of many individuals and by communities of great and enviable repute. I do not preach the dangerous and discouraging doctrine that no man who does not start at the bottom of the ladder can ever hope to reach the top. One should be childless to find any comfort in such a creed as that; for who would wish to prosper if his prosperity meant his children's incapacity? The fact is that no outward circumstance is fatal to the development of a true man, if the good will is there to make the most of the conditions. There are those born at either end of the social scale who equally earn their living in the highest sense, and justify themselves perfectly before God and men. That the son of Midas, the great millionaire, has not the Midas-touch is not the worst possible misfortune. He may have something else that is quite as good as that. He may be able to spend as shrewdly as the governor could earn. And then, too, though we are apt to think and talk as if all the hindrances and obstacles were reserved for those born in poverty, it surely is not so. Wealth has its own obstacles, its temptations to a weak effeminacy, to an inactive life, to arrogance and pride; and it is by measuring himself against such obstacles that the young man may find out what stuff there is in him, and prove his human quality. Those who have too readily assumed that wealth is fatal to the young men who are born to it have had much sound instruction on this head during the last few months. Our golden youth have proved themselves in camp and battle no whit inferior to the cowboys of the Western plains, equal to them in courage and endurance and in their appreciation of true manhood under whatever skin.

"In an age of fops and toys,
Wanting reason, void of right,
Who shall nerve heroic boys
To hazard all in Freedom's fight,—
Break sharply off their jolly games,
Forsake their comrades gay,
And quit proud homes and youthful dames
For famine, toil, and fray?
Yet on the nimble air benign
Speed nimbler messages,
That waft the breath of grace divine
To hearts in sloth and ease.
So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
So near is God to man,
When duty whispers low, *Thou must*,
The youth replies, *I can*."

But it is the hindrances and oppositions of a narrow, sordid, and untoward life that most attract the popular imagination, and give the novelist and orator a forever fascinating theme. Yet it must not be forgotten that the hindrance and the opposition may be overdone. We celebrate the survival of the fittest; but how about those who, in the struggle for existence, have not the energy to survive? "You cannot plant potatoes too deep," said the wise farmer, "unless you plant them a little deeper than you oughter." And it may be that you cannot have too much hindrance and opposition for a boy or a young man to wrestle with, unless you have a little too much. The mute inglorious Miltons are no fable of the poet. There have been many such. Given a less formidable opposition, and they might have sung "a song to generations" with the best.

"But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page,
Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll;
Chill penury repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul."

In the case of our own Lincoln are we quite sure that it was those hard conditions, that abominable environment,

those base companions, and those sordid ways that made him the Lincoln of our boundless admiration and immeasurable love? Surely, the wonder is that anything sound and sweet was able to survive in him those hard conditions. They were too hard. He so bruised himself against them that he carried the scars with him his whole life long.

Nevertheless, however I may qualify, I am not in the least disposed to surrender my conviction that the hindrances and oppositions with which brave men and women have wrestled in the lonely dark have often, if not always, hid a God-like blessing in their hard and smiting hands. Too many are the credible tales of patient struggle eventuating in substantial success or glorious victory for there to be any doubt of this. Emerson was persuaded of it when he wrote: —

> "Cast the bantling on the rocks,
> Suckle him with the she-wolf's teat;
> Wintered with the hawk and fox,
> Power and speed be hands and feet."

And what we have read in books, in the biographies of famous men and women, our own experience has confirmed, so many good successes have been preluded with the clash and clang of hostile elements. It is the second wind that brings the runner safely to his goal, and it is not otherwise in the race for those prizes which await the energy and assiduity of men in all practical affairs. The first chapters of all the more successful lives are apt to be the records of a succession of disappointments and rebuffs. And it is these disappointments and rebuffs that make the ultimate success, or rather it is the use to which these things are put. What is one man's meat, we say, is another man's poison. The disappointments and rebuffs by which some men are lamed and crushed are made to serve by other men as stepping-stones to victory. This, of course, makes you think at once of Sill's tremendous poem, in which the young prince saves the day with a poor coward's broken sword.

And it is evident that the hindrance and the opposition are not sufficient of themselves. It is the bracing of the man to meet them that converts them into the energy of successful power. But, given a will to succeed, and the oppositions and the failures pass into the structure of the man, and harden him for great resistances and large events. As I was thinking of these things, a book that I was reading for another purpose brought me the story of a great locomotive builder. He would build locomotives, better locomotives than had ever hauled a train before. At once obstacles of all sorts confronted him, and at the same time splendid openings to do other paying things not in his chosen line. But no: he said, he swore, "I will build locomotives," and that one thing he did; and they were better locomotives for every obstacle he had to overcome before he came into his own. And he was one of many thousands, some of them famous men, while some of them have no memorial, who have made proof of this method of progress and success through manifold opposition.

It is with communities and states much as it is with individuals. It is not those for which nature has done the most that are the states and countries of which history loves to tell. Emerson wrote, "The God who made New Hampshire taunted the lofty land with little men"; but he had in mind the abasement of Daniel Webster in comparison with Mount Washington's high-towering crest. In general, the poorer soil produces better men. Bishop Heber was an unconscious political economist when he wrote of the tropical regions,

> "Though every prospect pleases,
> And only man is vile."

The tropical regions, which produce so many things with little labor, do not produce men. On the contrary, they unmake men already made. That is the trouble with our Cuban friends. Our soldiers, who have had personal knowledge of them, say the Spaniards are the better men; and it

is so. The tropical climate always softens the fibre of the colonist from the temperate zone. Give our Western hustlers a century of Cuba, and they would not hustle any more. In all tropical countries colonized by emigrants from the temperate zones, the tendency is for the savage and barbarian to pull the better man down to his level, not for the better man to bring them up. It is where man has a fight with nature that he has been endowed with glorious strength. New England's rigorous climate and her scanty soil have bred a race of stalwart men, builders of great institutions and the fashioners of enduring States. England was literally "a fen of stagnant waters" before the Roman and the Saxon came to drain and till; and, before the Dutch had taken Holland from the hostile sea and made a tulip-bed and garden-patch of it and the United Netherlands, it was as unpromising and forbidding as any natural situation could well be. It was the resistance which the lagoons of Venice offered to those who planted there "beside all waters," and the energy which that resistance piqued and nourished, that made the marriage of Venice with the Adriatic prolific of such a proud and splendid State, and men of such supreme ability and great renown.

There are, however, more intimate suggestions in my parable than any I have so far presented to your minds. Emerson said, "A course of mobs made Wendell Phillips the best speaker in America." But there are mobs that muster in a man's secret heart that are more formidable than any that go shouting through the streets. They are the aggregates of those fierce and stormy passions that assault our citadel of righteous will. The man who is not overborne by this assault, who meets it squarely, and comes off more than conqueror, is by that sign more nearly a whole man that he could be untempted and untried. There is sometimes an oily calm upon the sea that makes us wish the winds would blow and crack their cheeks. And there are men and women whose lives present just such an oily

calm. We ask each other what the trouble is with them; and we answer, "They are too dull to know temptation; or no real sorrow has ever struck them to the heart." And hence they are devoid of sympathy. Sorrow and temptation are mere words to them: there are no corresponding realities in the mind. There is a virtue which is as insipid as arrowroot without salt or sugar. A very different thing is theirs

> "Who, dowered with every gift of passion,
> In that fierce flame can forge and fashion
> Of sin and self the anchor strong."

I wish that you could drive with me some perfect day along the Westfield River's shady bank. How beautiful the rippling water's flash and gleam! And that pleasant music of the flowing stream,—for me the pretty imitations of Beethoven's "Pastoral Symphony" do not begin to be so sweet. And all that pleasant music is made by the resistance offered by the rocks and pebbles in the river's bed to the advancing stream. How fine and beautiful would be the personal economy of life if we could meet the various obstacles that bar our way in such a fashion as to make them instruments of music! It is not impossible to do such a thing. There are those who do it all the time. There is, let us say, some inexpugnable fact in their experience. And it is possible for them to encounter it daily in such a fashion as to make a monstrous discord in their lives, the stridulence of which is not only fatal to their own peace and comfort, but afflicts many others with its perpetual din. But a man can say of such a thing, "Here is my opportunity for patience and for self-control." And, if the opportunity is not thrown away, a man can turn it to most excellent account. He can nourish in himself a temper that shall serve him well in other "moments to which heaven has joined great issues" and in the thousand lesser circumstances of his life. Not only so, but his friends and all who know him will gather from his presence something of peace and quietness, some-

thing of help and cheer. A good fight is never for its day alone: it is for many days. And it is not alone for him who bears its utmost stress. No man can live his own life bravely and quietly, and not be an energy of social good, virtue proceeding forth from him to heal some brother's wounded heart.

There is — but this I hardly need to say — a wrestling with God which is productive of no good, and where the event, if victory, is of all defeats the most deplorable. It is where a man endeavors to subdue those energies in his own breast which he knows are gracious and divine, to silence those voices that plead with him to forsake his evil ways. Whatever the appearance of success, it is unreal. No ingenuity can secure us against moments when

> "A bolt is shot back somewhere in the breast,
> And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again,
> And what we are we know,"

and know the difference between the slough in which we wallow and the heights which we have resolvedly foregone.

But this is by the way, and must not be regarded as a contravention of my main insistence; namely, that the beneficent and healing forces of the world, the divine energies that liberate and lift the soul, often enmask themselves in hostile shapes, and seem intent on our destruction when they mean our blessing and our peace. Do I personify too much? Say, then, that the resistance in things, in circumstances, in events, in men, is there for us to wrestle with, as Jacob with his divine antagonist in the thick and mournful dark. Let us say to each of these as he to that antagonist, "I will not let thee go unless thou bless me." Let us compel the personal limitation or defect, the failure of our plans, the disappointment of our hopes, the dull inertia of the social mass, the anxieties that harrow us, the griefs that weigh us down, the resistances of our environment to our wish and will,— let us compel these things, and such as

these, to yield to us that blessing which they so artfully conceal and yet are anxious to bestow. Like that of Jacob in the story, it is oftentimes a struggle in the dark. Dim and shadowy and featureless is our antagonist in the appalling gloom. We cannot see his face, still less his gracious smile. All we can do is just fight on, and, when our strength is broken, wait upon our aching side until the morning dawns. Then it may be revealed to us that the dread opposition we have met and overcome was that of no malignant enemy, but perfect friendliness for the time being putting on a hostile shape. Another metaphor expresses the same idea in a form that makes a less unique demand on our imagination: —

> "With aching hands and bleeding feet
> We dig and heap, lay stone on stone;
> We bear the burden and the heat
> Of the long day, and wish 'twere done.
> Not till the hours of light return,
> All we have built do we discern."

You have seen, last Sunday and to-day, how naturally and easily my thought reverts to our great national affairs. I trust you would not have it otherwise than so. We should be less than American, less than human, if we could put these things aside, if we could resist the gravitation of our thought to them. Hereafter I shall speak of them with deliberate exclusiveness. But even now I think I do not force the note when I imagine that the wrestling of Jacob is a parable for the people of America. The awful problems that confront us cannot be swept away like the battalions of the Spaniard from our path or like his war-ships from the sea. But to face them squarely does not require a courage less grandly exercised or less nobly used than that of Wheeler before Santiago or Dewey in Manila Bay. And we, too, are very much in the dark. But this much is sure: the more portentous our problems, the more awful our

responsibilities, the more superb the opportunity for measuring ourselves with these, and proving to the world by our victorious strength how great and good we are. We cannot, I think, exaggerate the seriousness of the situation. The greater, for this reason, the event, if we are equal to the necessity that is laid upon us in this day of trial.

"Great Master of earth's mighty school,
Whose children are of every land,
Inform with love our alien rule,
And stay us with thy warning hand
If, tempted by imperial greed,
We in thy watchful eyes exceed.

"That in the days to come, O Lord,
When we ourselves have passed away,
And all are gone who drew the sword,
The children of our breed may say,
These were our sires who, doubly great,
Could strike, yet spare the fallen state."

THE WISDOM OF FOOLS

AND yet not so much "the wisdom of fools" as of such as are accounted fools by those who account themselves particularly wise,—the prudential moralists, the hard-headed, matter-of-fact utilitarians, who would measure everything by its money value or by its equivalent in things good to eat or wear. Wisdom is justified of her children, said the good Galilean; and what I should like to show and to illustrate is that this wisdom which is accounted foolishness by many is justified of her children; that, given an outlook sufficiently broad and inclusive and intelligent, it will be seen to be a higher and a better wisdom than the penny-wise, pound-foolish prudentialism whose votaries think they are the people, and that wisdom will die with them.

Not without serious purpose have I read to you this morning the pathetic story told in the New Testament of the woman who anointed Jesus with the costly spikenard, and thereby excited the wrath of the stout utilitarians, who objected that it might have been sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor. This story is told in every one of the four Gospels, but never twice in quite the same way. The total range of difference is great, and is significant of the uncertainty attaching to the New Testament story of Jesus in its every part. Thus in Luke the woman is represented as "a sinner," meaning what Desdemona could not speak; while in John she is identified with Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who had chosen the better part which could not be taken from her. Wonderful has been the ingenuity which the harmonizers have shown in straightening out these things. There is one device that never fails them;

namely, to conceive that the different narrations refer to different events. By this device the character of Mary of Bethany is saved; but at great expense of critical credulity. It is most unlikely that we have here anything but several distortions of a single event in the life of Jesus. For my present purpose, it boots not to consider which of them is the most trustworthy. They all agree in the one incident of the waste of the ointment, and three of the four in the serious and solemn reprehension of this waste by some of the people who were witnesses of the distressing scene, and also in the particular that Jesus justified the woman in her act of generous devotion and uncalculating love.

And in the situation here depicted with so much naïve simplicity I seem to find a parable of things which are continually happening in our modern life. Ever the alabaster box of precious nard is being broken, and its contents lavishly poured out; and ever there are those among the lookers on who mourn the foolish waste; and ever, too, there is some one of a different spirit to come to the rescue of the doer of the reprehended action and say: "Let her alone! She has done a good work."

What I wish to do this morning is to throw myself not carelessly and violently, but firmly and unquestionably, upon the side of the so-called unpractical in this division of opinion, to "stand up for Jesus" in this particular aspect of his life, and for those who, in the line of his behavior, dare to justify something and much of what is commonly accounted waste of money, labor, power, affection, genius, life. Fain would I plead for what my friend Lloyd Jones calls "the uncalculating soul," and enlist your sympathies with mine and those who think with me as to the relative wisdom of the New Testament woman and her critics, as to the relative wisdom of their respective followers all the centuries down.

I have used once or twice the word "utilitarian" to designate the narrow practicality which objects to any expendi-

ture of power or money which is not justified by its immediate concrete results. But there is a higher utility, and a lower; and, if the lower does not take my fancy or elicit my approval, the higher claims my warmest admiration and my most profound assent. We have no use for a morality which is of no use to anybody. Those who declare that we should do right because it is right, do but seek to put us off with an identical proposition. Right is not made more august by being found to be without any foundation, any rationality. It is that which is essential to the good of life, the art of men's living happily together. But there is a utilitarianism of the Franklinian moralist which is quite another matter from that which finds the essence of morality in its contribution to the fulness and the worth of life. The higher kind is broad enough to include many things on which a cheap expediency would coldly frown, high enough to include many things that are accounted rash and dangerous, deep enough to include many things that have no obvious utility.

I take this line with greater confidence because I have recently been reading a study of Nansen's venture farthest North, by Mr. Leslie Stephen. Now Mr. Leslie Stephen, as some of you know well enough, is one of the great utilitarians. His *opus magnum*, "The Science of Ethics," is one of the most complete and irrefragable statements of utilitarian ethics that have ever been produced. But his utilitarianism is not that of Simon, the Pharisee; it is not that of the utilitarian who will dare nothing, who must see all the results of his action before he will take a single step, who measures the utility of the action by the immediate practical result. If his utilitarianism were of this kind, there would be nothing in Nansen's venture in the "Fram," and across the ice and water, during those long interminable months, that would appeal to his sympathy and admiration. And yet it does appeal to his sympathy and admiration in a very marked degree, and this, too, without any inconsistency,

without any sacrifice of his essential principle. Why and how does it do this? Not because he finds in Nansen's venture any increment to scientific knowledge that justifies so much "expense of spirit," the jeopardy of so many lives, each one of them capable of work manifestly serviceable to human needs. Even such gain to science would impress our utilitarians of the baser sort as a miserably inadequate result. If Nansen could have opened a passage all the way through Bering's Straits to Greenland, and seen to it that it did not close behind him, that would have been something like. That might have indefinitely facilitated the killing of seals and the selling of their pelts at a good profit where it is now comparatively small. In fact, about nine-tenths of all our scientific exploration is, from the lower utilitarian point of view, a waste of the ointment. But this does not affect Mr. Leslie Stephen's admiration of Nansen and his arctic toil and strain, and for the reason that in that toil and strain he sees a kind of glorious play. It was Schiller who defined the æsthetic element in human nature as "the play impulse." But Mr. Stephen would credit to this impulse a great many activities of the mind and will that are not æsthetic, that have not the beautiful for their goal. "Poetry or music or painting, the fine arts in general, suppose a form of activity in which a man devotes himself not to any further result, but to the expression of his own emotions and the cultivation of pleasurable sentiments." They are, then, by this sign, a kind of play. Have they, then, no utility? To say Yes "would be to suppress all the elevating and refining impulses, and to look forward to a state in which everything except the gratification of the instincts necessary to the lowest kind of existence would be suppressed." But not only is art in all its forms a kind of play, but every kind of activity which exercises the mind and will without reference to immediate practical ends. And all must have play as well as work for the completeness of humanity. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy."

"The ideal civilization supposes that a large part of the energy of the human being should be spent in healthy enjoyment, in activities which are delightful for their own sake without reference to any further end."

And here alone would be a sufficient justification of the play-impulse, and its due exercise, if there were no other. Even as so considered, it would find a place in any large utilitarian scheme. But its right to such a place is justified on other grounds. Science and art are not merely the delight of those who are most deeply engaged in their pursuit; they contribute immensely to the order and the happiness of the community; and you cannot say to the student of one or the other, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther." What would art have been if it had been limited to the practical uses of society? What would science have been if it had been so limited? It would not be difficult to show that those discoveries of science which have been least inspired by any narrow utilitarian end have frequently been among the most serviceable to humanity. When Faraday was pushing his investigations in electricity, he had no thought of telegraphs and telephones and trolley cars and the innumerable other appliances with which electricity has revolutionized the system of the world's social intercourse and locomotion; and yet no one contributed so much as he to all these useful things. Yet it is not by such unforeseen advantages, accruing from the pursuit of science on its loneliest incursions into the sphere of the unknown, that we justify the lavishness of its expense. It is by the addition which such incursions make to our confidence in human nature, to our belief in its capacities, to our sense of its nobility, whereby our own aspirations are exalted, and our own wills are re-enforced, and our whole lives raised to a higher plane. We have this interesting paradox,— that nothing is more useful to mankind than the existence of a body of men and women who cannot confine themselves within the sphere of the immedi-

ately useful, but must indulge in the immeasurable spontaneities of thought and action. Nothing could be more fatal to the greatest good of the greatest number, which is the very butt and sea-mark of the utilitarian's sail, than the confinement of men's universal energies within the limit of life's mere material necessities. The Faradays, the Darwins, the Nansens, all the great, bold discoverers and explorers, are invaluable to us, not only because the springs of their endeavor feed the streams of practical invention and discovery, not because they afford us great examples of the nobility of human nature and give us boundless inspiration, but because they are the treasurers and dispensers of that glorious spontaneity of thought and will without which life would deaden down into the merest atrophy of its divinest possibility.

The box of nard is always being broken, and its fragrance is forever gushing out; and, whatever be the time and circumstance, seldom or never do they lack some censor questioning: Why was this waste of the ointment made? Why was not this energy directed to some useful end? Why was not this stream of power economized to turn some wheel of practical activity? How much there is of scientific study and investigation, how much of music, poetry, and the other arts, how much of moral conduct, how much of religious thought and feeling, that cannot justify itself at the bar of Simon, the Pharisee, in the court of practical, material claims, which, nevertheless, the higher standards of utility, those that measure life by its fulness and its spontaneity, make wholly good. Socrates is accounted one of the wisest sages of antiquity, yet he would have had men abjure all physical science. In the same spirit, Comte would have had men abjure sidereal astronomy and biology. And why not, from the point of view of mere practical utility,—the utility that demands immediate results in current coin or in some concrete commodity? Newton and Herschel and Laplace and Young,—what effect have their investigations ever had

upon the price of stocks or merchandise? What have they effected for the physical comfort of mankind? Little or nothing; and what is true of these is true of an innumerable company. Nevertheless, let them alone: they have done a good work upon us. Even Comte was not entirely blind to it when he declared, "The heavens do not declare the glory of God: they declare the glory of Newton and Laplace." Certainly this, however it may be about the other. If Darwin gave us nothing else, he gave us Darwin, a man as single-eyed as any seeker for the truth in any age or land. As for Nansen, if we cannot turn to any practical account what he has told us of the great depth of the arctic sea, we can turn to practical account the greater depth of his own moral nature, the strength of his indomitable will, facing that "inconceivable toil," and confident that he could accomplish it because he knew he must. When I saw him a few months ago, and thought of all that he had done, and read the lines which his great and solemn experience had graven on his noble face, I could not but think that the North Pole itself, were it some visible entity commensurate with the long and arduous search, were not so grand a sight.

But the great adventurers in science have given to us much besides their own nobility. In this reckoning I make no account whatever of their incalculable addition to the safety, comfort, and material happiness of human life. Let all this vast amount be placed to the account of the plain, matter-of-fact utility which to such critics of the prodigal soul as Simon, the Pharisee, is all in all; and this, too, notwithstanding my persuasion that much of just this matter-of-fact utility has been the ultimate result of what appeared to be the most lavish waste of scientific energy. Let all this go, and still, besides the infinite refreshment of their own personal nobility, the great scientific venturers have set the world in our hearts, they have brought home to us the wonder and the grandeur of the invariable laws, they have baptized us "in the name of Life, the vast, the mysterious, the

excellent." If great was the temptation which Job resisted when he cried, "I have seen the moon advance in her majesty, O God, and I have not bowed the knee," how much greater is the temptation of the modern astronomer and those who can think his thoughts after him to bow down in worship of the heavenly host! And why should they not adore the bright appearance of the manifested God?

Another waste of that ointment which is the essential oil of man's intelligence, another vast expenditure of thought, proposing to itself no concrete end, no obvious utility, is that of metaphysical speculation. And here the waste is such that even the men of science often join in the loud cry of reprobation that goes up at such expenditure of genius to no useful end; for metaphysics cannot claim, as science can, that, whatever strength it has wasted, it has economized a good proportion for the safety and the comfort of mankind. There are those who insist that it can claim no real progress from the time of Plato until now,—that what one generation of philosophers builds up the next pulls down, and thinks it has done something wonderful. I do not myself assent to this conclusion. It seems to me that, while there is perpetual ebb and flow, each tide comes just a little higher up the beach than did the last, and leaves there some richer treasure from the deep caves of "thought's insurgent sea." Yet, even if I could not hold this faith, I still should say of the metaphysicians: "Let them alone! They have wrought a good work upon us." I am so glad that, even if their search is hopeless, they have gone on from age to age still "nursing the inviolable hope, still clutching the inviolable shade, with a free, onward impulse." I am so glad that, while the Positivists have never wearied of assuring them, "You can know nothing but phenomena," they have persisted in believing that they could know something of noumena as well,—something of the face behind the mask, something of the eternal mind.

"They fail, and they alone, who have not striven."

If these have failed, they have afforded us a glorious spectacle of intellectual daring,— a spectacle which we cannot look upon and not live deeper lives; and not have a fuller, richer, and more awful sense of what a man may be, and some rousing of the heart to be not all unworthy of our blood and state.

The range of art is much wider than the range of metaphysics, and the expense of spirit in the waste which art entails is much more obvious than that entailed by metaphysics. Very common is the wisdom which reproves the fools who waste their substance in such riotous living as that of the painters and the sculptors and the poets and musicians. What is the use of any of the things which these create? Can men eat statuary and drink pictures? can they keep themselves warm with music? can they go hither and thither in a temple or cathedral, as if it were a steamer or a train? At the same time, it must be granted that there are few comparatively who are so dull as to care for none of these things; and, of those who are, some are so gracious as to confess that the fault is in themselves, and not in the objects which they have not the talent to admire. In fact, there is no body of facts under the weight of which the lower utilitarianism so manifestly and completely breaks down as that called æsthetic. It utterly disclaims all practical serviceableness. A house is no more useful because it is beautiful. The most beautiful statue is less useful than the block of marble out of which it is hewn, if by use we mean homely practical service. And yet these things are indispensable. Without them, life for many people is not worth living. Better to die for beauty than to merely live for bread. Here is a mesh so fine and spread so wide that even the stout utilitarian sometimes finds himself entangled in it. A lovely rose, a lovelier face, confutes his theory that only the immediately serviceable has any right to be. One chord of tender music shatters it to bits. Evidently there is a higher

utility that takes up these things into its perfect sphere. Evidently, that is also useful which ministers to the joy of life, to the exaltation of our sentiments, to the fulness and o'erflowing of our hearts. Let them alone,—the sculptors and the painters, the poets and the architects and the musicians. They, too, have wrought a good work upon us. They have anointed us with the oil of gladness. The fragrance of their precious spikenard fills all the chambers of the mind and all the sinuous labyrinth of the heart with its delicious breath. The utilitarianism which would count these things as worthless, because they serve no coarse material end, would pluck the rainbow from the sky, the flowers from their sweet hiding in the earth's warm breast. "If I had two loaves of bread," said Mohammed, "I would exchange one for daffodils; for, while bread sustaineth the body, to look upon the daffodil rejoiceth the heart." And even as the daffodil is all the infinitely various beauty of the world, whether of nature's opulence or man's device.

Continuing still in the straight path, we come at once upon the personal aspect of the matter. Nowhere else is there such waste of ointment, such vain expense of vital energy, such utter foolishness of prodigality, as in the personal relations of men and women, those being our judges who hold fast to the belief that the worth of actions is dependent on the immediate benefits which they insure. Look, they would say, at these efforts which society is making all the time for the preservation of the unfittest, interfering with the natural struggle for existence, and keeping alive people who were better dead, both for the reason that their lives are not worth living, so far as they are concerned, and because they are a drag on all the rest. Look, they would further say, at these wives wearing themselves to death for husbands utterly unworthy of their love, at these children covering their parents' shame, at these parents going on year after year, hoping against hope, spending themselves unweariedly for some boy or girl whose blood is primarily determined to

an evil flow. Look at the good sisters denying themselves every sweet and pleasant thing, loving beauty and going meanly clad, starving themselves daily, wearing their fingers to the bone, in the fond hope of staying some poor worthless brother on his downward track. Look yet again, they say, and see how many who might shift the burden from their shoulders and let others carry it, whom it would neither crush nor gall, refuse to let it go. I have myself, and very recently, had personal knowledge of such a quiet martyrdom as this; and I could not help thinking that, if there is no rest remaining for such people of God, there ought to be, and it would seem as if within the void such beautiful devotion and long-suffering might build a heaven suitable to its just reward. But why specify a single instance, when there is no day of the full year when the whole earth is not belted round with the pure light of such self-sacrificing deeds? If such deeds are wasted, then there is no measure to the waste that is as recurrent as the light of sun and stars. The tragedy of love that spends itself in hopeless ways or upon worthless lives, or where it brings no answer or appreciation, or where the evident effect is wholly disproportionate to the expense of spirit,— this tragedy is one of the most common that afflicts our mortal state. Utter foolishness it is, the most of it, seen from the point of view of any mercantile utility, any sordid calculation of the immediate concrete effects proceeding from the devotion and self-immolation of the bravely dumb who do these wonderfully kind and tender and unselfish things. And yet I dare believe that nowhere is the wisdom of fools, the wisdom which is condemned as utter foolishness by the prudential moralist, more completely justified of its children than it is exactly here. And why? Because, if we could ill spare the spontaneity, the glorious play, of science, metaphysics, art, to share the spontaneity, the glorious play, of men's self-sacrificing love would be more difficult,— yes, far more difficult. It is the salt of the earth; and, if this salt should lose its savor, as certainly it

would if the prudential moralist could have his way, then life would lose its savor, and would henceforth be good for nothing but to be thrown under the feet of brutes for them to grovel in after their kind. It is good sociology that the survival of the unfittest is no such calamity as would be the suppression of that spirit of humanity which requires no other stimulus for its exercise than the sight of human misery. And it is good ethical psychology that, if the great instincts of the soul are to be kept alive, then they must have free play. These instincts have for their objects truth, beauty, goodness, God; and they will not work in the treadmill of life's concrete utilities if they may not be allowed to revel in the glorious play of a supreme and reckless spontaneity. Say to them, "Thus far, and no further," and their resentful tides will sullenly withdraw from your prudential bound. What heart would Newton or Darwin have had to go on with their great studies if they had been tethered to a stake in an enclosure limited to the knowledge necessary for a comfortable existence? Science can tolerate no such prudential cage.

"No pent-up Utica contracts her powers";

but the whole boundless continent of truth is hers, and the whole boundless heaven in which to soar and sing. Set limits to the freedom of science, and you deny yourself even those practical utilities that are within her reach. And, as it is with the scientific, so is it with the spiritual life. You cannot clip its wings, and make of it a barnyard fowl laying you serviceable eggs, and have it sing for you at heaven's gate, and thitherward invite your soul. You will get from it even less than you require if you propose to draw a line at that. This is the higher utilitarianism, the wisdom of fools,— namely, that the great instincts must have free exercise; that they cannot live on any other terms; and that, without the inspiration of their daring flights, thousands who now know something of the empyrean would never get be-

yond the neat enclosures which the prudential moralist contrives for petty and inglorious souls.

And now lift up your eyes, and, touched by the magic of this simple, obvious interpretation, you shall see the New Testament story of Jesus and the wasteful woman taking on the vast proportions of a parable of human life. You shall see the house of Simon widening to the breadth of the whole earth and lengthening to the length of all the centuries of recorded time. For Jesus you shall see Humanity sitting at that great feast which is spread for it by the eternal goodness and the primal love; and for the wasteful woman with her box of precious nard "the uncalculating soul," the indifference of the spirit to anything but the best, the unfettered spontaneity of thought, of beauty, and of love, which does for us a better work than our most prudent calculation, the fragrance of whose mercy sweetens all the air, while evermore its balsam soothes our aching brows and so renews our wounded feet that they are strong to take again the steep and perilous way,

> "On to the bound of the waste,
> On to the city of God."

LIVES WORTH LIVING.

THE seasons, as they come and go, have not more certainly their appropriate kinds of weather, bloom, and fruit than they have their appropriate moods of thought and feeling; and the moods of thought and feeling appropriate to these last days of the year are very serious and even solemn, — the moods appropriate, I say, and hence do not commit myself to the rash statement or belief that these moods are generally realized. For a great many people all days are very much alike, and for a great many others the afterglow of Christmas lasts until the New Year morning breaks, ruddy with hope and joyous expectation. But a great many people have the poetic temperament, which makes much of times and seasons; and for a good many, too, the reaction from the excitements of the Christmas season, its busy preparations, and its expectations more or less pleasantly fulfilled, makes it all the easier to pass within the cloud of questioning and introspection with which the crowning summit of the year is naturally overshadowed. I say "naturally," without failing to remember that there is no definitive circumstance in the order of the world that obliges us to end one year and begin another at just this particular time. Formerly this passage was effected at the spring equinox, and that arrangement was much more natural than the present one. The early spring is certainly a much more natural time for new beginnings than midwinter. If some time about this time was to be chosen for getting "off with the old, on with the new," it should have been some ten days earlier, with the first lengthening of the day and growing light. Such sentiments as now attend these last days of the year came formerly, no doubt, from the 15th to the 20th

of March; and, so inevitably does the social consciousness adapt itself to any temporal regulation, that I have no doubt that, for a long time after the formal change of reckoning was made, a great many people found themselves looking backward in the mid-days of March and looking forward at the equinox with uncommon earnestness and zest. And, if some of the people who are for changing everything should make another shift of the year-post, so completely has our social consciousness adapted itself to the temporal regulation that a great many, I am sure, would for a long time find themselves indulging the moods which are now dominant with us at this time of year, with a predilection as inevitable as that which causes the shores of Lake Superior to blossom with the flowers which are survivals of a time when the waters of the lake were as salt as the Atlantic's waves.

However that might be, our solar year is drawing to an end; and the more thoughtful of us are reflecting with much soberness upon the fact, reminding ourselves that it means one year less of our allotted span; asking ourselves whether that is something to be sorry for or to be glad about; asking ourselves, too, perhaps, whether the having lived another year means any progress for us in the art of living well, and how much richer or poorer we are now than we were a year ago in the love and friendship and the various satisfactions and delights which, if they do not make our lives worth living, make them much more endurable than they would otherwise be. And, thinking on these things, almost before we know it we find that we have moved the previous question, "Is Life Worth Living?" — a question which a few years ago acquired a special prominence, and was much discussed, and which is always coming up anew for fresh adjudication. It had been argued with great force and brilliancy by Professor William James; and, if there is nothing final in his conclusions, his contribution to the discussion is one of the most interesting and important I have met.*

* "The Will to Believe," pp. 32–63.

"Is life worth living?" Whose life? There are seventy millions of people in the United States; and their lives are no two of them alike, and no two of them are equally worth living. Shall we allow each man to judge for himself? Such a referendum would, I doubt not, show an immense majority upon the optimistic side, a great many of them acknowledging that many things are hard and miserable, but finding a preponderance of the scales upon the other side. The simple fact that there are only about three thousand suicides a year in the United States,— only about three thousand! — while it does not show, of course, that all the rest consider life worth living, shows that these three thousand do not. Their number would be much increased if motives of fear and courage did not supervene,— the fear which a traditional piety has nourished of what things await the suicide upon the other side of death; courage to hold the fort, however hard beset, because surrender would mean the sacrifice of others' happiness. But when every allowance has been made for the deterrent forces, religious, superstitious, and humane, that limit the number of our suicides each year to "only about three thousand," and even when it is remembered that there are not a few who stand up to their work, not because life seems to them worth living, but because it seems to them so poor a thing that they must do all they can to better it, it must, I think, be confessed that, allowing people to be their own judges, the number of those who consider life worth living is far in excess of those who hold the contrary opinion.

When Mr. Mallock forced this question on the public at the spear-point of his brilliant screed, some palterer in a double sense made answer to his question, "Is life worth living?" "It depends on the liver." There is many a true word spoken in jest; and there never was a truer than we have compacted in this joke, which, once cracked, like the famous egg of Columbus, we all wonder that we didn't do it ourselves. "Give me health and a day," said Emerson, "and I

will make the pomp of emperors ridiculous." And it must have been at some time when he had this double portion that he said, "Almost I fear to think how glad I am." But, on the other hand, see how the demoralized stomach of Carlyle invested the whole earth and world in folds of pitch-black gloom. With that in evidence "the valley and shadow of Frederick" were as insupportable as the valley and shadow of death. There are certain physical conditions that depress a man's conviction of the good of life with infallible decisiveness, while there are others that are much more painful and dangerous that have no such effect. Some of the most cheerful optimists that I have ever known have been the greatest sufferers. But where is the chemistry that shall assure us how much of the pessimism of this one or that is pure rationality, and how much is to be credited to some poisonous secretion in the organs of nutrition? When we know that James Thompson, who has written the saddest poem of the century, "The City of Dreadful Night," was a dipsomaniac, his terrible arraignment of existence cannot but seem extremely partial to us, if not wholly false. What personal equation was there in the pessimism of Leopardi and Byron and Heine and Schopenhauer and the others of their mournful crew?

So much for one side of our true word spoken in jest. Now for the other. I am still speaking, not of the absolute worth of life, but of the individual estimate of it, as if that were decisive of the fact. It depends on the character of the man and the character of his experience. If we should make a census of the poets and other writers who have put themselves on record in this matter, it would be strangely contradictory in this particular. We should have Browning singing,—

> "How good is man's life, the mere living, how fit to employ
> All his heart and his soul and his senses forever in joy!"

and Whitman insisting that he does "not see one imper-

fection in the universe," and, on the other hand, Thompson and Leopardi with their doleful cries. Temperament has much to do with the opinion. Some are lead and some are india-rubber to the blows of fate. His name is legion of whom it can be written,—

> "This is he who, felled by foes,
> Sprung harmless up, refreshed by blows."

But there are those whose temperament seems most fortunate, for whom the force of adverse circumstance is finally too much. They are beaten down and marred and wasted; and it ill becomes those who have all they need and all they wish, who are lapped in luxury and fed with nectar and ambrosia, whose domestic fortress seems impregnable to the assault of sickness and death, and whose passions are milder than the radiance of the crescent moon, to reprobate, or even wonder at, the men and women who with or without the advantage of a happy temperament are sunk in poverty, afflicted with the loss of dearest friends, racked and strained with passions that upheave and wrench them like volcanic fires.

Those who can gratify their every wish so far as outward benefits and enjoyments are concerned imagine that life cannot be worth living for the men and women who have none of all their luxuries and advantages. But the people whom they pity do not consider themselves so very pitiable. And, indeed, they are not, as compared with the most pampered and luxurious, if they can be supposed to know when they are well off. It is from the highly favored, as we habitually think of them, and not from the ranks of labor and struggle and poverty, that the pessimism of the dying century has derived the sustenance which has enabled it to maintain its feeble cry. It is the cry of surfeit rather than of misery and want. It voices the persuasion that man cannot live by bread alone, however fine the wheat, and whatever superabundance there may be of cake and comfiture.

It voices the inaction which so often breeds distrust of life and all its gifts. On the other hand, the misery of the hardest-working and the poorest-paid attains to no such consciousness in their own breasts as in the breasts of those who "sit beside their nectar," but, unlike the gods of Epicurus, cannot smile because of others' lack of all which they enjoy. I have seen something of hard-working manual laborers close at hand, and I have found them lighter-hearted than the richest people I have known. Here is a bit out of the song of a sick stock-rider in Australia: —

> "I've had my share of pastime, and I've done my share of toil.
> And life is short,— the longest life a span;
> I care not now to tarry for the wine or for the oil
> Or for the wine that maketh glad the heart of man.
> For good undone and gifts misspent and resolutions vain,
> 'Tis somewhat late to trouble. This I know:
> I would live the same life over, if I had to live again;
> And the chances are, I go where most men go."

You will say perhaps that this was written by a poet, and not by a stock-rider; but it was written by a poet who could ride a better steeple-chase than any other fellow in the colony, and I think he knew whereof he wrote, and that his words were written that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed. There are some sentences in William James's article that help me to the illustrations that I want of the relative values of the surfeited and hungry life, as seen from the inside. "It is," he says, "a remarkable fact that sufferings and hardships do not, as a rule, abate the love of life: they seem, on the contrary, to give it a keener zest. The sovereign source of melancholy is repletion. Need and struggle are what excite and inspire us: our hour of triumph is what brings the void. . . . Germany, when she lay trampled under the hoofs of Bonaparte's troopers, produced perhaps the most optimistic and idealistic literature that the world has seen; and not till the French 'milliards' were

distributed after 1871 did pessimism overrun the country in the shape in which we see it there to-day. The history of our own race is one long commentary of the cheerfulness that comes of fighting ills." So far the essayist, and I am confident that he does not overrate the significance of struggle and adventure in the normal consciousness of the good of life. It is these which make "some distant coast alluring, some lone isle," to eager men, "who must go there or die." One reason why the Puritan temper in New England relaxed so rapidly was that it could not withstand the simple, natural joy of taming a new continent. To know that we are not the puppets of the fates makes life worth living. The men who take up arms against a sea of troubles are working in the stuff of which optimism is made. When half the Pilgrim company were buried on the seaward hill, the first winter's dreadful work, and not one of those remaining took the returning ship, Lucullus never spread a feast that was so sweet to him as was their meagre fare to them.

> "Winds blow and waters roll
> Strength to the brave, and power and deity,"—

and joy as well, and happy confidence that it is good to be alive and here.

But it is difficult to do justice to one side of any matter and not do injustice to the other. That one man's meat is another man's poison is a good saying and worthy of all acceptation. Scott sang with a strong personal accent, and in no merely dramatic manner,—

> "Sound, sound the clarion, fill the fife!
> To all the sensual world proclaim,
> One crowded hour of glorious life
> Is worth an age without a name."

But for Milton the ideal life was exhausted in "beholding the bright countenance of truth in the quiet and still air of

delightful studies." At least, so Milton thought, yet found himself one day the secretary of Cromwell, writing defences of the Commonwealth which rang like steel on steel. The fact is that not only do men differ widely as to what constitutes the good of life, but they do not always agree with themselves about it. The extremes of optimism and pessimism meet in the same personality. But from out the welter of opinions there are some islands which appear, whereto a man may guide his battered keel. And, of all these, the most safe, if not the most alluring, is the conviction that good, honest, manly, fruitful toil and struggle have in them surer promise of a happy confidence in the good of life than any other things on which the sun looks down.

But the most of these conclusions have for their major premise the assumption that men and women are the best judges of their own condition, that they know better than outsiders when they are well off. Now in this assumption there is much of truth, but at the same time a strain of error. Only a few days ago there sat opposite me on the trolley car a man who interested me so much that, when he left, I sounded my next neighbor as to his social function, and found that he was the keeper of a saloon on a certain corner, which I will not designate. He made me think of John Weiss's epigram,— "There is no such brute as a man." I have never seen a brute, not even one of those who wallow in their sty, that gave me such an impression of animalism, vicious and impure. His talk — which even my deafness could not but overhear — was all of his betting on the late elections; and there was something horribly interesting in his naïve persuasion that the sole object of elections was to furnish something to bet on for such creatures as himself. But what impressed me most about him was his entire and perfect satisfaction with himself and with the world as he found it. There was no doubt about it. It sparkled in his small, black, bead-like eyes, and it exuded from his hanging jowls, and dimpled in his puffy hands. Himself the judge, he

was as well off as any man alive. Life worth living? He should rather think it was! And there are many such as he,— gross, sensual, human swine, than whom there are no better satisfied upon the earth, with what it is to them and what they are to it. And this fact raises a very interesting question: Is there any common measure of life, of happiness, of good success, which anybody can apply to all the lives about him and his own, and judge in what degrees they are worth living through the whole range? This is a question to which the ethical philosophers have given much attention, but without any satisfactory results. Yet one thing is sure: that, given a man devoted to ideal excellence, and he cannot admit that there is no test but the subjective, that a man's own opinion is decisive in every case, even of what is best for him, and much less of what is absolutely best. If such a man knows anything, he knows that there are lives that are not worth living because they are so immersed in sensuality and sin, however well satisfied those living them may be, unless there be some larger life beyond in which to purge the grossness of the soul away. That these would not exchange their lives with any of the saints and heroes of the race makes not a particle of difference to the moral idealist. His idealism is not of that kind which denies the reality of everything external to the thinking mind. He is as sure as of his own existence that, whatever the individual persuasion, lives have their different values through the widest range, and that the most valueless of all are those well satisfied with gross and sensual things. Though you should grind him in a mortar with a pestle, yet would not the conviction depart from him that the lives of Emerson and Channing were of far greater worth than any bruiser's of the slums; that the life of Jesus, disappointed, crucified, breaking his heart upon the sharp and cruel edges of an alien time, was of infinitely greater worth than that of the most luxurious and careless epicure of the Roman court.

"Though love repine and reason chafe,
There came a voice without reply:
'Tis man's perdition to be safe
When for the truth he ought to die.'"

But, however we may cling to these persuasions, the fact remains unshaken that it is an easy thing for us to be mistaken as to the relative values of different lives, judging them from without. There are those that seem most barren from this standpoint, which not only *seem*, but *are*, quite different from the coigne of inward vantage. There is all the difference between the outward and the inward aspect here that there is between the outside and the inside of such windows as those of Chartres and Amiens and Notre Dame. From the outside nothing could be duller and more meaningless. From the inside nothing could be more beautiful.

"I lift mine eyes, and all the windows blaze
With forms of saints and holy men who died,
Here martyred and hereafter glorified;
And the great rose upon its leaves displays
Christ's triumph and the angelic roundelays."

Far better things than these are often seen by those whose eyes look outward from the heart of lives that from without are colorless and cold, it may be battered and decayed.

"A man's life is not in the abundance of the things that he possesses." There is, perhaps, no other word that Jesus spoke that is so widely disbelieved. It is a true word, nevertheless. The rich people do not believe it; the poor people do not believe it; the labor reformers are almost exclusively industrious, for the most part, in their endeavors to convince the poor people that Jesus was never more mistaken. But he was not mistaken; and the poor people and the rich people, hundreds and thousands of them, know that he was not, the former for the reason that with no abundance, but with barely enough to make both ends meet, they find a wondrous pleasure in their work, in their domestic love, in

their neighbors and their friends, in sitting on the shore and seeing the great rushing stream of modern life go by,— nay, in the feeling that they are being borne along upon its flashing tide. On the other hand, who does not know that there are men and women who have a great abundance of material possessions, into whose overflowing cup has fallen some poisonous drop of conscious misery or shame, some failure at the heart of life, some loss that, weighed against a thousand gains, outweighs them all, some sacrifice of life's ideal ends to its materialistic pomps and vanities, after the manner of the lovely woman whose tragedy Charles Dudley Warner has depicted with so much force and beauty in his "Little Journey in the World"? Do you say that she is but a woman in a novel? Nay, but in real life there are a great many like unto her, and some who from a higher height than hers descend to lower depths, while still they seem to be the favorites of fortune, and to lack nothing which the heart can wish. Can you bear to hear again that terrible poem which I read to you a year ago, that one by Mr. Howells, which sears our eyeballs with a flash by which we see what misery inheres in the damnation of a mean success?

> "If he could doubt on his triumphant cross,
> How much more I in the defeat and loss
> Of seeing all my selfish dreams fulfilled,
> Of having done the very thing I willed,
> Of being all that I desired to be!
> My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!"

Of such mean successes who shall say that there are more than of the splendid failures of mankind,— failures in the race and struggle for material things, failures to win some crown of peace or joy,— splendid because there was no bending of the sturdy heart, the upright will, before the cruel blast. But, thank Heaven, life does not divide itself into these streams that flow through such far separated channels onward to the sea. "In medio tutissimus ibis." The middle

course is best; and there how many thousands sail secure, what time life's lovely pageant is unrolled on either hand! How many in life's common ways are well content with what therein they find, and in no wise deceive themselves in thinking that it is exceeding good!

You will say, perhaps, that I have not much advanced, if any, the solution of the general question as to the worth of life. But I shall not be greatly troubled if you do. I imagine that the physiologists are right in their opinion, that it is joy that builds the total structure of the animal and human world, and that, if the preponderance were upon the side of pain and misery, this structure would tend to ruin with an irresistible momentum. But this huge abstraction interests me far less than the concrete particulars of human life as it unfolds itself from day to day. Considering these, I see that there are many thousands whose lives are not worth living, seen from some outward point of view, which are thought to be well worth living by the people who are most intimately concerned; and that their judgment is just, for the most part, I have little reason to doubt, and less inclination. "Who knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man that is in him?" But I cannot, as I have shown, accept this test as absolute. As I look abroad upon the world, I see innumerable lives that do not seem to be worth living, either because they are so full of wickedness or folly or because they are so full of pain, unless some such experience is God's rough way of shaping them into his image; but at the same time I see that "a man's life is not in the abundance of the things that he possesses," and that the persuasion that it is so leads to all manner of mistakes in estimating the average worth of life. There are joys unspeakable "in huts where poor men lie," and there are sorrows black as night and terrible as hell in palaces where wealth and luxury abound. To say this is not to pretend indifference to external benefits. The extremes of poverty and wealth are about equally deplorable; but what we must in-

sist on is that the habitual exaggeration of the material circumstance is monstrous and absurd, and that the amount of happiness and the quality of life are entirely incommensurate with this.

Meantime that there are lives worth living, there is not the slightest doubt. There would be just as many such, or more than ever, if the pessimist were right in his persuasion of the general worthlessness of life. If pessimism is a true doctrine, then the more meliorists the better. If this is the worst possible world, blessed are they who try to better it, and do! If all that life amounts to is the fellowship of wanderers "in a barren waste, who share the same dire thirst and therefore share the scanty water," there is at least the fellowship, there is the sharing of the scanty water with those whose necessity is greater than ours. If we are merely fellow-heirs of this small island life, it is something, it is much, that we can "plough and sow and reap like brothers." To do this is to live a life worth living. Here is at least "a fighting chance" for "some small good beyond self-satisfaction," and for a good deal of that, because, as William James has shown, the human animal is full of fight, and never happier than when he takes up arms against a sea of troubles, if haply, by opposing, he may end them, or at least beat some of the most overtopping of them down.

But, to be assured that there are lives worth living, it is by no means necessary to accept the pessimistic view of life, if haply we may have the joy of battle to the full, in fighting against hopeless odds. For the most radiant optimist there is enough of concrete evil in the world to pique his courage. Those are the lives worth living that are spent in resolute endeavor to make life's evil less, whatever its proportion to the whole, in widening the skirts of light, in diffusing beauty and happiness, and joy, and peace. They are not few. They are such a multitude that no man can number them; and, as one star differeth from another star in glory, so these from one another, so various are they,

these saints and soldiers, these thinkers and poets, these sculptors and painters, these builders and inventors, these discoverers and founders, these honest merchants, these workers at the press and loom and plough, these mothers with their children in their arms, these statesmen following the things that make for justice and for peace, seeking the good of all, and not some partisan advantage, these thousands who have no memorial, and who will never have any in bronze or marble, who in all sorts of quiet, unpretending ways are making life for those who live with them a sweeter, holier thing. Supposing that you cannot give any satisfactory answer to the question, "Is Life Worth Living?" here is the fact that *there are lives worth living;* and they present to us a question which each one of us can answer if he will: Is my life one of these?

With the afterglow of Christmas still lingering in the west, and all the east aglow with the bright promise of another of God's glorious years, how can our hearts but turn to him who lived a true man's life, a life worth living, in Galilee and in Judea eighteen centuries ago? how can we but be glad that there have been so many of his elder and his younger brethren filled with his spirit, anticipating his devotion, carrying on his work? and how can we but make haste to range ourselves with these, and make our lives worth living both for ourselves and for those who have a right to look to us for help and cheer? There will never be a better time than this for us to make a brave beginning, though we should live an hundred years.

"Up, up! All fame, all power,
Lies in this golden text:
This is *my* hour,—
And not the next, or next!"

THE GREAT PERHAPS.

THE title which I have given to my sermon is one which some of you, no doubt, are able to trace, as I am not, to its original source. I have the dimmest possible persuasion that it originated (*Le Grand Peut-être*) with Rabelais or some other French writer, and that, as first used, it was used as a definition or delimitation of God, and not as a definition or delimitation of immortality. But this is sure: that, whatever its original source or meaning, the expression has been used, of late, quite as often to synonymize "immortality" as to synonymize "God"; and it is as synonymizing "immortality" that I have taken it this morning as the title of my discourse.

As synonymizing immortality, it is, I think, significant of the body and direction of a great deal of thought and sentiment which have been latterly developed. I have conversed with many of you on this head; and I should like to with many more, in order that I may determine whether I am right or wrong in my persuasion that many of you here, who formerly regarded immortality as a blessed certainty, now think of it as the Great Perhaps, some of you emphasizing the Perhaps. Let me be entirely frank about this matter, and say that, when I came to Brooklyn, thirty-four years ago, to find persons in my society having any doubt of the reality of a future life was difficult, but that to find such now is easier than I could wish. For this change has not coincided with any weakening of faith on my part. The progress or — if I may not without presumption say the progress — the change has been from less to more confident affirma-

tion, at least since the collapse of my original Transcendentalism, with its joyful consciousness of immortality, threw me back on such reserves of science as were then at my command. From time to time I have endeavored in set terms, and much oftener incidentally, to re-enforce your faith by the expression of my own; and yet I think I cannot be mistaken in my apprehension that, as a society, your assurance of a personal immortality is less pronounced in 1899 than it was in 1864.

I should the sooner take shame to myself on this account, as not having made good use of my opportunity to impress my thought upon your minds, were it not that I am thoroughly convinced that the direction of your own has been that of the community at large, and this, too, notwithstanding the fact that a great many people during the last four-and-thirty years have reached through Spiritualism, its teachings and phenomena, such an assurance of immortality as they did not have before. I am persuaded, perhaps unduly, that your declining faith in immortality, as a society, is owing less to any failure on my part, whether of absolute assurance or of convincing argument, than on the general social trend of thought concerning this sublime conception of the soul. Not a few of you have been like the people on the ice-floe of the now-classic simile, who, pushing north with resolute faces and with eager feet, have found themselves borne steadily southward by the drifting floe. It would improve this simile, no doubt, if I should represent the conscious endeavor as being toward the warmer south, and the inexorable drift as being toward the icy north where nothing human lives.

For those of us who most deplore this tendency of thought, it has one aspect that is eminently encouraging. If nothing else can be said in praise of it, this may be said with confidence,—that it has the merit of reality. The faith in immortality as it existed here in my own society and more obviously in its social environment thirty years ago was a

survival in religious culture; mainly that.* It was held unquestioning,—

> "As the infant's hand
> Holds purposeless whatso is placed therein."

It was a survival of the general faith of the community, which, in its turn, was based on the supposed resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Yet not entirely upon that. It would reflect too much dishonor upon human nature to suppose that its faith in immortality was such an inverted pyramid as it would have been, resting solely on the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. I must believe that it was buttressed, braced, and bolstered all along by certain rational considerations and by the strong affections of the human heart. But the resurrection of Jesus was the only conscious, intellectual basis for the belief. This was so, even among Unitarians. One Unitarian minister said that, if the body of Jesus should now be found in a Jewish sepulchre, his faith in immortality would be gone,— an opinion that was not, as the insurance people say, extra-hazardous. Another was industrious in his endeavors to make out that we have no just grounds beyond the resurrection of Jesus for believing in a future life. This was the common note. For many years after I came to Brooklyn, my senior Brooklyn colleagues sounded it lustily in the course of every funeral service which they were summoned to conduct.

So, then, it happened that, wherever men began to think, the empty grave, on which their faith was built, caved in, and left them choked and smothered in the ruins of an argument which had no logical coherency. Their condition was forlorn, but it was real; and, consequently, it was a great improvement on a belief in immortality held as a mere tradition, or held on such a basis as the resurrection of Jesus

* It is true that an inner circle, created by Mr. Longfellow and Mr. Staples, took Transcendental ground, but these were only a small part of the society; and I well remember the very general chorus of dissent which greeted, very early in my ministry, a sermon in which I frankly disowned the resurrection of Jesus, either as a fact or as an argument for immortality.

from the dead, which cannot be established as a fact, nor as approximating ever so remotely to a fact, and which, could it be established, would afford no proof of human immortality, seeing that, by the terms of the argument, Jesus was not human, and which, moreover, if it proved anything, would prove too much,— the resuscitation soon or late of every mortal body ever buried in the earth or burned with fire or sunk in the unfathomable sea. For men to prefer annihilation to the intellectual suicide involved in the belief in immortality on the ground of such an argument was not only an intellectual gain, but a clear moral gain as well. For there are morals of the intellect, and to believe in such a stupendous fact as immortality on a basis of argument so utterly flimsy and inconsequent as that of Jesus' resurrection from the dead would be a proceeding more immoral than many offences for which men are fined or sent to jail or otherwise socially punished.

The collapse of the argument for immortality from the resurrection of Jesus was of itself an incident of the growth of scientific principles. Science was in the air, and men could not help breathing it; and to breathe it was to require some stronger meat than the traditional argument, some better reason for believing in a future life than any exhalation from an empty grave, remote in space three thousand miles, in time two thousand years. But the negative force of science was displayed in another and quite different manner. Various factors in the development of thought and the tremendous output of material energy in the industrial world tended for a time to bring into common, if not general, vogue a materialistic conception of the universe. It is not too much to say that that conception is now as thoroughly discredited as the Ptolemaic astronomy or the orthodoxy of Abraham Lincoln. Science and Philosophy are now well agreed that we are much less sure of matter than of mind. There were of old two jokes of about equal pertinence: "What is mind?" "No matter"; and "What is matter?"

"Never mind." The former is as good as ever; much better than it seemed to be thirty years ago. But the other? — "What is matter?" Can we still say, "Never mind?" On the contrary, as by us apprehended, it is purely mental. It is a form of thought. Science and Philosophy are perfectly agreed in saying this.

But it was not so formerly. There was a time when the materialists seemed to be carrying everything before them; and, the world having a material origin, the materiality of the soul and its consequent dependence on the material organism and dissolution with the dissolution of the body were a corollary which many felt themselves obliged to accept, however hateful to them it might seem.

And, even more obviously oppugnant to the soul's immortality than the general materialistic doctrine was the evidence that went to show how tragically the mind of man is implicated in the structure of the brain. This evidence was the more convincing because it fell in so readily with conclusions shaped upon men's common, every-day experience of the mind's dependence on the brain. They find themselves too tired to think. Let them be very hungry, and their memory fails. A good meal brings it back again; and the inference is unavoidable that, to think and to remember, the brain requires physical nourishment just as much as the body for its accustomed work. The effects of physical injuries to the brain are too obvious for any one to doubt the intimate dependence of the mind upon the cerebral organ.

Moreover, while it is true, as I have said, that materialism as a theory of the universe is utterly discredited, it is also true that the tragical implication of man as a spiritual being in the fortunes of the physical brain has become more positive and definite with the lapse of time and the development of what is called physiological psychology, which is the study of the mind as conditioned by the structure and the action of the brain. "Every one knows," says Professor James, "that arrests of brain development occasion imbe-

cility, that blows on the head abolish memory or consciousness, and that brain stimulants and poisons change the qualities of our ideas." But the anatomists, physiologists, and pathologists have shown this generally admitted fact of a dependence of the mind upon the brain to be particular and minute. "What the laboratories and hospitals have lately been teaching us is not only that thought in general is one of the brain's functions, but that the various special forms of thinking are functions of special portions of the brain." Whence it would appear that the old-time phrenologist is not so absolutely discredited as we have been assured. He was kicking at something in the dark, which wasn't so very different from what he imagined it to be. "When we are thinking of things seen," say the new physiological psychologists, "it is the convolutions at the back of the brain that are active; when of things heard, those at the side; when of things to be spoken, those of the forehead." Professor Flechig, of Leipzig, believes that he can locate those convolutions which originate the more abstract processes of thought, and that by the degree of association of some convolutions with others the complexion of our emotional life is decided,—"whether one shall be a callous brute or a criminal, an unbalanced sentimentalist or a character accessible to feeling, yet well poised." Now these conclusions of the laboratory find their way very quickly into men's common thought; and so every day the question grows more common: "How can we believe in life hereafter, when science has, once for all, attained to proving beyond possibility of escape that our inner life is a function of that famous material, the so-called 'gray matter' of our cerebral convolutions? How can the function possibly persist after its organ has undergone decay?"

I have brought this matter to your attention under the stress of a recent deliverance of Professor William James, from which I have already quoted freely, and which is certainly very interesting, whatever it may lack of ultimate

significance. I do not know that I can make his meaning plain to you. If I do not, you would do well to look up the lecture* on Human Immortality recently delivered under the auspices of Harvard College on the Ingersoll foundation. Subscribing, as a physiological psychologist to the formula, Thought is a secretion of the brain, he asks, Does this formula logically compel us to disbelieve in immortality? Ought it to force every truly consistent thinker to sacrifice his hopes of a hereafter to what he takes to be his duty of accepting all the consequences of a scientific truth? And he answers that, in strict logic, the formula in question carries with it no such obligation. And why? Because there is more than one kind of functioning, and the functioning of the brain is not or may not be of that kind which obliges us to think the function ceases with the breaking down of the cerebral organism. Ordinarily, when the physiologist says, "Thought is a function of the brain," he thinks of the matter just as he thinks when he says, "Steam is a function of the tea-kettle" or "Light is a function of the electric circuit." In such cases we have *productive function; i.e.*, the material instruments have the function of creating or engendering certain effects. Now, if the brain is merely a kind of tea-kettle, and thought is produced by its function as steam is produced from the kettle, it would be as useless to look for a soul after the destruction of the brain as to look for steam, after the destruction of the kettle, from that particular kettle.

But *productive* function is not the only kind of function we are familiar with in physical nature. "We have also *releasing* or *permissive* function, and we have transmissive function." And now pray do not resign yourselves to slumber, because these terms are words of more than one syllable; for in reality they are as plain as cat or dog, if you will prop-

* I could ask for no better result of my sermon than that it should send my readers to this lecture (published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co.), and so make the inadequacy of my report a matter of no importance. But for making my sermon too long for my hearers, I should have quoted the lecture more at length. It is too compact to admit of effective condensation.

erly attend to them. I will use Professor James's illustrations, because none equally simple and expressive have occurred to me: "The trigger of a cross-bow has a *releasing* function: it removes the obstacle that holds the string, and lets the bow fly back to its natural shape. . . . In the case of a colored glass or refracting lens we have *transmissive* function. The energy of light, no matter how produced, is, by the glass, sifted and limited in color, and by the lens or prism determined to a certain path or shape. Similarly, the keys of an organ have only a *transmissive* function. They open successively the various pipes, and let the wind in the air-chest escape in various ways. The voices of the various pipes are constituted by the columns of air trembling as they emerge. But the air is not engendered in the organ." That has no *productive* function, so far as the air is concerned, however influential it may be as to the form of "what is piped."

Now it is Professor James's contention — and his contention is evidently not merely ingenious or fanciful, but profoundly serious — that, if thought is a productive function of the brain, it is not merely that, but also a permissive or transmissive function; and this makes a mighty difference. "Suppose," he says, "that the whole universe of material things should turn out to be a mere surface-veil hiding the world of genuine realities." So Shelley thought, and, thinking, sang,—

> "Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,
> Stains the white radiance of eternity;
> Death shatters it to fragments."

Suppose this dome, tolerably opaque for the most part, could at certain times grow less so, and let certain "bright shoots of everlastingness" come through. Suppose our brains to be such rifts in the prismatic dome as will permit the white radiance to come through "in all sorts of restricted forms and with all the imperfections and queernesses that

characterize our finite individualities here below." The quality of the light transmitted — the universal reason, "the Over-soul" of Emerson — would depend on the character of the brain. This is a barrier that rises and falls, now letting in a flood of spiritual energy, now but "a few sad drops." "And when,"— again I quote Professor James,—"finally, a brain stops acting altogether or decays, that special stream of consciousness which it subserved will vanish entirely from this natural world; and in that more real world with which, even while here, it was continuous, the consciousness might, in ways unknown to us, continue still." "You see," he says, "that, on all these suppositions, our soul's life would none the less in literal strictness be a function of the brain." And he adds: "In strict logic, then, the fangs of cerebralistic materialism are drawn." But for the strength of the argument I would not have you depend, too much, on my paraphrase of it, which necessarily is very much condensed. At the least, it calls a halt to the presumptuousness of either scientist or sciolist, who from the admitted fact that thought is a function of the brain proceeds to argue that "house and tenant go to ground" at one fell swoop; that with the disintegration of the brain there is an end of everything that constitutes the individual soul.

I have less concern with the second part of Professor James's lecture, which, as a whole, treats of "two supposed objections to immortality," one of which is that thought is a secretion of the brain, while the other is substantially that of the Scotch woman — I think she was Scotch — who said that she did not wish to be saved in a crowd. And yet it differs from that, because the Presbyterian hell requires a good deal more room than the Presbyterian heaven. And the second objection to which Professor James attends is that the world is not big enough for the swarms of beings from our own and other planets that are implied in the conception of man's general immortality. So long as astronomy and theology were geocentric, and there were only the inhabitants

of our little earth to colonize, and of these only the production of six thousand years, theologians, however Malthusian, need have no fears of over-population. But our new conceptions of the universe multiply the candidates for immortal life by millions upon millions, and require a territorial expansion in comparison with which the ideas of our political expansionists, even the most liberal of them, shrink "from the smallness of a gnat to air." And it is not merely the incalculable multitude of beings that baffles the imagination: it is the heterogeneous character of that multitude, so different from the elect of the traditional theology. And so, as Professor James has written, we give up immortality for ourselves sooner than believe that all the hosts of Hottentots and Filipinos that have been, and shall ever be, will share it with us forever and ever. It isn't as if we could think of all these people, as could our ancestors, as so much mere fuel for the fires of hell. "We have, as the phrase goes, *no use for them* [not even such a use as that]; and it oppresses us to think of their survival."

Now, so far as over-population of the heavenly country is concerned, I do not think we need have any least anxiety. "The world's a huge thing," as even Shakspere knew when he overheard Iago's wife say so to Desdemona; and it is much huger now than it was then. Its territory has increased at least *pari passu* with its population. For the rest, does Professor James honestly think that the exclusive tastes of a mundane aristocracy are worth considering in this matter? I strongly suspect that he has made their distaste for being saved in a heterogeneous crowd an excuse for a splendid outburst of his own vital sympathy with the swarming multitudes of universal life. He tells the people who prefer annihilation to promiscuous immortality that "their attitude is due to the veriest lack and dearth of their imagination." He tells them that those swarming multitudes are very different to themselves from what they appear from a distance and from the outside. "They

realize themselves with the acutest internality and the most violent thrills of life. . . . Each of these grotesque or even repulsive aliens is animated by an inner joy of living as hot or hotter than that which you feel beating in your private breast." "To miss the inner joy of one of these is, as Stevenson says, to miss the whole of him. . . . It is absurd to suppose, simply because our private power of sympathetic vibration with other lives gives out so soon, that in the heart of infinite being itself there can be such a thing as plethora, or glut, or supersaturation." And "the Deity that suffers *us*, we may be sure, can suffer many another queer and wonderful and only half-delightful thing."

Now I like all this, not so much as an argument for immortality nor as an answer to very select people who are not worth answering, but as an expression of human sympathy and belief in life as such. I can conceive of many arguments for immortality for which I would not give so much as for such a robust and manly plea for the intense self-realization of the innumerable millions that *have* swarmed, and do, over the planet's face, and presumably over the face of planets millions strong. But, if you think the argument for immortality is slight, I shall hasten to agree with you; and, if you extend your doubt to the argument from transmissive function, I shall still keep you company. Not but that this argument does, as Professor James contends, give to our thought of immortality freer wing, and not but that I am glad to have a trained psychologist assuring us that the scientific formula, "Thought is a function of the brain," need not deter us from belief in soul beyond the scope of sense, so long as *function* is not only *productive*, but also *releasing* and *transmissive*. The trouble with the argument is that it does not assure us of our individual persistence, and it is our individual persistence that we cry out for when we cry out for immortality. We want to have the happy moment stay: we want our friends to look and be forever as they looked and were some perfect day of days

which we cannot forget. "Our finitenesses and limitations seem to be our personal essence; and, when the finiting organ drops away, and our several spirits revert to their original source and resume their unrestricted condition, will they then be anything like those sweet streams of feeling which we know, and which even now our brains are sifting out from the great reservoir of our enjoyment here below?"

We must not be ungrateful for a little because it is not all we want. We must, as Father Taylor said of the bodily exercise which profiteth little, "go for that little." And yet I cannot but think that there is something unbecoming in the greediness with which in these last days the theologians have snatched at every crumb that has fallen to them from the tables where the men of science sit at joyful feast. "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?"— an under-fed and starving dog at that? Is religion so poorly off in its own right that it must be a mere dependent on the bounty or penuriousness of its thrifty child? We hear much of the scientific basis of religion, but the basis of religion is not scientific: it is human. It was a reality before science; it was a reality for many centuries when its attitude with regard to science was one of deadly mutual opposition; and it is a reality now far in excess of all the help that comes to it from scientific truth.

In no respect is this more obvious than in respect to the immortal life. I could myself, if I were so disposed, bring scientific intimation, if not confirmation, to the hope for such a life. For example, science dispels the doubt that anything so wonderful as immortality can be true. Science declares that nothing can be too wonderful for our belief. The more wonderful any great, far-reaching fact or law, the more likely is it to be true. There is another intimation in the fearful prophecy of science,— that the earth is tending to some ultimate catastrophe, when the moon will plough its surface, and all physical life will be impossible in the blight of its interminable days. Now, so long as there was a

prospect of indefinite continuance of life and progress on the earth, a dream of social immortality was not so bad a substitute as might be for the individual kind. But, if "the caravan draws to the dawn of Nothing," to cry with Omar Kháyyám, "Oh, make haste!" were not a thing to blame. Why lengthen out a play that comes to such a dreary end? But such a dreary end makes unmistakably for the immortal life, if there be any principle of rationality involved in the great sum of things.

> "What care I though falls the sky,
> And the shrivelling earth to a cinder turn?
> No fires of doom can ever consume
> What never was made nor meant to burn."

We may not attain to such sublime indifference as this, but it does make the scientific scheme of world-destruction more endurable to have a noble confidence that death is not the end.

But these are negative considerations. Two that are positive invite me to a moment's speech. They are two "natural laws in the spiritual world." One is the conservation of energy. If we have here a law that runs straight through the world, and does not "fall flat and shame its worshippers upon the groundsel edge" of spiritual things, what conservation is there of the energy of any great or even the humblest soul in what we bury in the earth or burn with fire; or even in the blessed memory which we inurn in our poor, broken hearts? Again, there is the law of vital correlation. This is the law which insures in animal structures, together with the development of special organs, parts, and functions, the development of certain others, adapting the animal structures to changed conditions. Now in the spiritual life of man there goes along with all that is best in his intelligence, noblest in his affections, grandest and sweetest in his moral nature, the hope of an immortal life. Here at the top of our condition is a correlated growth; and,

if the hope which is developed correlatively with our noblest being is not a solemn and majestic portent of a sublime reality, then have we a radical contradiction in our nature, for which God must be held responsible. How can it be possible that the same Power which organizes in us the purest splendors of our thought and love, and correlatively the hope of an immortal life, should not make good the promise that is so convincingly implied in such a correlation?

But these crumbs, which have fallen to me from the table where the kings of science sit at glorious feast, are not the meat on which that Cæsar feeds who fords for me the Rubicon which we call Death, and brings me hostages from the Immortal Life which is beyond the flood. So recently has Science had the least encouragement to say anything proper to this subject that I do not think of it as having yet exhausted its message. It may yet bring us arguments for immortality of irresistible cogency. Would that be loss or gain? It would be loss to the religious quality of our relation to the question of a future life. No doubt that loss would be made up to us, for it is inconceivable that any increment of knowledge should abridge the possible religiousness of human life. But it would substitute a scientific certainty for a daring hope which is essentially religious. Meantime the daring hope remains to us, and would remain, were science much more silent than it is or spoke only to interpose objections to our hope of a continuous life. All that science can oppose to immortality counts for less with me than the quiet face of one who lies fast folded in his last long sleep. I cannot make him dead if he was good and true; still less, if he was false and bad, and missed the way of life. I must believe that there are "other kingdoms of a sweeter air" in which are blown the flowers which have been chilled by earthly storm and frost. The daring hope of immortality belongs to us as men, as intellectual and affectional and moral beings. So long as we know so little, while there is so much to know; so long as we love so much;

so long as the ideal remains a flying goal, eluding all our search,— we must go on hoping for a better opportunity than is afforded by this present life for realizing all the truth and love and goodness that we need and crave. Given this daring hope, and we have the assurance of its glad fruition just in proportion as we believe the world to be a rational world, built up from justice as its corner-stone. And this we shall believe more simply and immovably if justice, rationality, and love are the three fadeless stars by which we sail life's strange and awful sea.

Would you then make your hope of immortality so strong that it shall pledge its own fruition, make sure that you actually have such a hope, and that it is as real to you as anything can be? Think deep and far; love greatly, infinitely; strive mightily for moral ends,— and, *then*, see with rejoicing heart how fearlessly your hope of life, triumphant over death, will lift its song to heaven. If such a consummation is the Great Perhaps, it is so great that there are many certainties which do not begin to do so much to make our mortal life deserving of the best that God can give.

RELIGIOUS IDEALS AND RELIGIOUS UNITY.*

WHAT but religious ideals are the universal objects of men's religious admiration? They may call their ideals by this name or that,— Brahmah, Yahweh, Zeus, or God,— but they are not less ideals on this account. For we are not permitted to suppose that, at any point in the development of religious thought and feeling, there has been an exact correspondence between men's conceptions of deity and the supreme reality. "Who by searching can find out the Almighty to perfection?" But if no one can, and this has ever been the judgment of the saner mind, then all the conceptions of deity which men have cherished have been ideal conceptions. If, on the other hand, there has been an exact correspondence, at some particular point, between the conception and the reality, then at every other point the conception has been more or less ideal. Take, for example, the religion of the Hebrews. The god-ideal varied through infinite degrees from the time of Moses to the time of Jesus. Renan did not exaggerate much, if at all, the character of Yahweh, until the prophets took him in hand and made a decent god of him. He was capable of almost any meanness, treachery, or prevarication. What an immeasurable distance between this conception and that of the greatest prophets, including Jesus with his ideal of a heavenly Father, tender and forgiving, loving his children with unspeakable compassion for their sufferings and yearning for their good! Now it is evident that, unless God himself was changing all the way along from Moses to Jesus, whether we suppose the conception of Jesus to have been provisional or final, the conceptions of the centuries before his

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day must have been idealistic: they could have had no exact correspondence with the actual character of God.

Christianity affords an illustration as apt as that which Judaism furnishes of the ideal character of men's religious conceptions. These conceptions have varied quite as much within the bounds of Christianity as within the bounds of Judaism from Moses to Jesus. The early Yahweh was but another Moloch or Chemosh. (The Moabite stone is proof enough of that.) He had their family traits,— jealousy, cruelty, vindictiveness. How different from "Our Father who is in heaven"! But not more different than Calvin's God from Channing's, Jonathan Edwards's from Theodore Parker's, John Knox's from James Martineau's. Now it is plain that all of these different conceptions cannot correspond to the divine reality. If God is such a monster-god as Edwards's or Calvin's, he cannot be the loving Father-God of Channing and Parker. It follows that all the other conceptions are more or less ideal.

But Christianity, in its leading conceptions, has had an opportunity for the development of ideals which Judaism lacked. *It has had Jesus to idealize as well as God.* Even within the limits of the New Testament the idealization has begun and proceeded not a little way. We have there several different conceptions of Jesus, and they cannot all be true. If Jesus was the Jesus of the Second Gospel, he was not the Jesus of the Fourth. If, again, he was the mysterious being of the Nicene Creed, he was not the perfectly simple religious teacher and reformer of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. And, if he was the awful judge of the traditional theology, he was not the incarnate pity of the New Testament narrations. Evidently, then, we have in Christianity, as much as in Judaism, a religion of ideal conceptions; yes, twice as much, because the conceptions of Jesus have had an ideal range equally with those of God.

Taking the wider range, the extent to which men's gods and their religious notions generally reflect their racial

characteristics or the stages of their culture, furnishes commanding evidence to the general fact of their religious idealism.

> The Ethiop's god has Ethiop's lips,
> Black cheeks and woolly hair,
> And the Grecian god has a Grecian face,
> As keen-eyed, cold, and fair.

There in four hackneyed lines you have an abstract and brief chronicle of world-wide manifestations, in little all the sphere of racial, temporal, and local influences upon religious conceptions. The Hebrew Yahweh was a Hebrew sheik; the god of Mediæval Christianity was a great non-natural emperor or pope. The deification of the Roman Emperors made the deification of Jesus by *his* subjects almost inevitable. (See Dr. J. H. Allen's "Mind of Paganism" in his "Christian History," vol. i.) We all know what a sharp reflection the theology of Latin Christianity was of Roman law. The "Institutes" of Calvin, the product of a legal mind, reek with suggestions of the legal methods and criminal procedures of his time. So English evangelical theology two centuries ago wrote large "the bloody assize" of Jeffreys, and made God quite faithfully and fearlessly in his image.

But this also must be cheerfully confessed,— that not infrequently the ideal conception has reflected less some general type of brutal energy than some individual tenderness and grace. Many besides Bunsen have seen the eternal goodness imaged in a wife's beloved face. To how many has it ever occured that the whole history of Christianity would have been different — nay, that it would, perhaps, have had no history at all — if one Joseph, a carpenter of Nazareth, had not been so kind and tender with his son Joshua, whom we call Jesus, that, when that son was seeking for the tenderest possible image of the divine perfection, he could find nothing tenderer than the fatherhood which he had known there in the narrow home at Nazareth, with

the sweet-scented woods and chips and shavings making it seem a better thing to be alive; and, when he was seeking for the dearest possible name for that perfection, he could find none other quite so dear as "Father." Why not Mother instead of Father? I do not know. We cannot say. Perhaps because he thought of them both together so naturally and inevitably that the father-thought enfolded the mother-thought for him as lovingly as did Joseph Mary in his sinewy arms. (But we shall see, erelong, what a most sweet revenge the centuries took on Joseph for the apparent preference which he enjoyed.) And what was going on there in Nazareth must have been going on in every other village of Galilee, and something like it has been going on all the world over from the time of Jesus until now, as it had been before his time.

> Nor knowest *thou* what argument
> *Thy* life to thy neighbor's creed hath lent.

What men really think and feel concerning God is determined far more by the people with whom they live than by the formal theologians. The common inference is ever swift from human goodness to divine. Men dare believe that God is greater than their hearts and than the greatest, warmest, truest hearts they know. There are hundreds of very ordinary people, some of them church members in good and regular standing, who are teaching atheism much more successfully than Colonel Ingersoll, whose heart somehow refutes the logic of his speech and sets people wondering whether the power that gendered him, and also this great universe, is not, perhaps, almost or quite as good as he.

I do not know of any better school of intellectual modesty than that to which we go when we attend to such considerations as the foregoing. To appreciate their force is to understand that dogmatism is absurd: it is to recognize that all religions, from the lowest to the highest, have been religions of ideals, but not ideal religions. Yet such recognition does not more certainly abash the confidence of the generations

that have come and gone than it does the confidence of those who fancy something final in the long result of time embodied in their own beliefs. That is wise teaching which assures us that our most refined conceptions are nearer those of the primeval savage than they are to the Supreme Reality. We may think it is discouraging. We may say, "If our approximations to Reality are so slight and gradual, what is the use of making them? Why not think the old thoughts, and go the old ways?" But if our approximation to the Supreme Reality is little relatively to a celestial scale, it still is, or may be, absolutely much, and meantime the infinite remoteness of the goal gives us a sense of closer brotherhood with those who were the first to think some shapeless or too definite thought of God, and all who, from their time until now, have chased the flying goal. Whatever may be the unifying energy of our religious ideals, there is surely something wonderfully unifying and spiritualizing in the perception that all our religious conceptions are ideal conceptions, the most exalted of them farther from the Supreme Reality than are the lowest from our best.*

Seeing deep enough to see musically, as Carlyle has written, I have no doubt that we should find that there have always been creditable religious ideals more or less closely connected with the formal statements of religion, often transforming these, often struggling to express themselves in them, while yet the accuracy of the formal statements is no measure of the validity of the ideals. These may be altogether fine and beautiful, while the formal statements are imperfect and absurd. What I wish to express in the remainder of this sermon is the truth that the ideals which men honor and revere are of much more importance than their theological beliefs, their formal statements of religion; and, moreover, that these beliefs and statements are often clumsy symbols of ideals which are very wholesome, sweet and good. Here, I am persuaded, there is a great deal to com-

* See Balfour's "Foundations of Belief."

fort us as we look abroad upon society and upon history, and see them given over to theological irrationality and absurdity. The situation is not really half so bad as it appears to be. The large and fair ideals condone much of the irrationality and absurdity. They unite many thousands spiritually who, measured by their formal creeds, are far apart, or who imagine themselves to be so. They spiritualize the minds of thousands whom the formal statements of religion merely formalize.

To make my meaning plainer, let me get away from these abstractions and come to certain illustrations that are very simple and concrete. To Unitarians the deification of Jesus is tremendously irrational. The attempts which have recently been made to secure for it some appearance of reason strike us as remarkable for their futility. The conclusion is not in the premises. There is an impassable gulf between their highest rational thought of Jesus and the Unitarian's humblest thought of God. But what I would have noticed is that, practically, the deification of Jesus has meant the exaltation of an ideal of righteousness and humanity and compassion; and it has been much better to worship this ideal under the name of Christ or Jesus than to worship implacable severity and cruelty under the name of God. Of all overrated things, deism and theism as such are the most overrated. Whether it is a good thing to believe in God or worship God or not depends entirely upon the kind of God believed in or worshipped. It is a bad thing to believe in a bad god, and a worse thing to worship one; for the things that men believe in and worship they tend to become like, being "changed from the same image from glory to glory," or from shame to shame. Better a thousand times honor and reverence the ideals of righteousness and purity and compassion in their naked beauty, or as personified in the life of Jesus or another, than be ever so theistic and not honor and reverence these ideals. Our theory of the universe is of small importance

in comparison with the quality of our ideals and our devotion thereunto.

One of the most suggestive criticisms with which I am acquainted is that of Dr. Martineau where he attempts to show what made early Unitarianism so dreadful to the best orthodox people. It was, he says substantially, because they thought our God the Father altogether such an one as theirs. Now their God the Father was a being of whom they had a shivering awe, a dreadful fear; but love for him they had none. All their love was for the Son, the good being who had quenched the wrath of the inexorable Father in the blood of his great loving heart. To lose such a being from the centre of their worship was, indeed, a dreadful loss. They would much rather have lost the Father. Hence the very real horror felt by the best orthodox people at the early Unitarian doctrine. These Unitarians had taken away the only person in the Trinity for whom they particularly cared. But the truth was that all that they admired and loved in Jesus the Unitarians had taken up into the nature of God, the Father. Our Father was not their Father, nor was our God their God. He was a God and Father rich in those attributes of love and tenderness and divine compassion of which they had denuded him, investing with them Jesus of Nazareth. Unitarians and orthodox were, in fact, worshipping the same divinity under different names, the same ideals uniting them in a common loyalty, and spiritualizing them with their intrinsic excellence.

As with the deification of Jesus, so with his specialization in any pre-eminent degree. It has been the sign and symbol of men's attraction to those ideals of "mercy, pity, peace, and love" which were illustrated by his character and life. No one, I am sure, is more enamoured than the present writer of the pure humanity of Jesus; and yet he can easily conceive that men should hold to this humanity as a mere doctrine, and entirely miss the inspiration of the

ideals of "mercy, pity, peace, and love," which were the master-light of all his seeing; and any theory of the nature of Jesus would be better than such deadness to the beauty and the splendor of his dominant ideals. Better believe that he was God, and worship his ideals, than believe that he was man, and be without the essential fire of his divine humanity. Better, on the other hand, say with Voltaire, "Let me never hear that man's name again!" and have Voltaire's immense compassion for the persecuted and oppressed, than, being one of the oppressors, believe in his eternal power and godhead. But best of all were it to see in him simply the glory of the human, and hence bring to the service of his ideals a force of personal inspiration impossible for those who elevate him to any superhuman altitude, "far from the sphere of our sorrow." For what man has done man may do; but how dare to hope that we may do the things of God, or of any supernatural being?

Let us take another illustration. In a beautiful square in Rome there is a noble column which was reared to commemorate the fact that on December 8, 1854, Pope Pius IX. declared the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary to be an article of faith. That was the climax of Mariolatry, and it had taken eighteen hundred years to reach it; and of all "corruptions of Christianity" upon Priestley's list, or that of any liberal Christian or even orthodox Protestant, I suppose that Mariolatry, the worship of the Virgin Mary, has been regarded as the worst. For myself, I do not see how it is possible to exaggerate the absurdity of the dogma or the worship, seen from an exclusively intellectual point of view. But if we look at this matter in its symbolical and ideal aspects, and not in its logical and critical aspects exclusively, we shall find extenuating circumstances that will give us pause. Morally, it was a good thing for men to turn with admiration, reverence, and worship from an unlovely and unloving God to Jesus, however named or known; good for them to accord to him that highest reverence they

could not honestly accord to a being void of all attributes that win the loving heart. And so, morally, it was a good thing when Jesus, forgetting the sweet habitudes of Galilee, became the awful judge, hurling his thunderbolts as if he were another Jupiter, but with less of human sympathy in his stony heart, for men to turn away from him and lay their burdens at his mother's blessed feet. Those of us who have been to Rome, and in the Sistine Chapel have seen the terrible Christ of Michel Angelo's "Last Judgment," cannot wonder that the common heart took refuge from the withering blight of a conception so frightful and appalling in the arms of "Mary, full of grace." Say, if you please, that the inexorable Christ was Michel Angelo himself, sitting in judgment on the sins of Italy: he imaged no less truly the average conception of the mediæval Christ. All that was tenderest in Italian art was the late fruit of seeds which Francis of Assisi planted in the bosom of mankind. Before his word had become flesh in art, the artist's favorite subjects were devils crunching and tearing each other, but afterward Madonnas blooming everywhere, like flowers upon the naked stalks of May. The painting of the Christ-child was no adequate expression of the new joy in little children that had come into the world. Think of the happy multitude of other children that play their mandolins and zitherns at the dear Madonna's feet! What did it all mean but a new joy in human life as God had given it? The man is blinder than a bat who cannot see that the Madonna was *any* mother; that the Christ-child was *any* blessed babe; that Saint Anthony of Padua with the Christ-child in his arms meant that the monk and nun were fools deliberately to forego so sweet a natural joy. But what has this to do with the unifying and spiritualizing energy of religious ideals? Much, every way. It makes it as plain as possible that the same religion which was a religion of dogmas, impossible for us, was also a religion of ideals,— ideals of sweet humanity, of father's love and mother's love, of

"mercy, pity, peace," and the other word which was blotted out in Parson Ripley's tattered hymn-book, but never has been wholly blotted from the much-worn and battered heart of man. And who shall say how much the reverence for such ideals did for the softening of manners and the sweetening of all natural affections in a hard and cruel time? In the Madonna pictures, Art set the seal of her approval on the natural instincts of the heart. The monastery and nunnery had in such art an enemy more powerful and efficient than the passion of reformers and the rapacity of selfish kings. Mariolatry as a dogma is something utterly preposterous to the rational mind. But, having said this, we have not said all. We have not said all until we have said, Better the dogmatic forms, if, without such worthless husks, men could not have had the sweet kernels,— those ideals of tenderness and natural affection which were as inseparable from the worship of the Virgin Mother as is the fond regret for days that are no more from the November ruin of the leafy choirs where late the sweet birds sang. The dogma separates, but the ideal unites. When Theodore Parker, seeing for the first time in Florence the Madonna Seggiola, cried with full heart, "My God, what a picture!" he was made one in the ideal, one in the spirit, with an innumerable multitude of Mariolaters, to whom the significance of Mary was, not her immaculate conception nor her miraculous virginity, but her tender heart of human motherhood.

Going behind the shows of things to the realities, we should learn that the religious life of universal man finds much more ample "verge and room for its measureless expansion" in the apprehension of ideals of many kinds, and in devotion to their ineffable beauty, "so ancient and yet so new," than in the dogmas which have been formulated with so much passionate sincerity. We should find these ideals compelling to a common reverence and worship thousands and millions of people who fondly or painfully imagine they are worshipping or revering very different things,— that

they are Jews and must have no dealings with the Samaritans. If, all at once, some signal could be struck, obedient to which men should range themselves under the banner of their most excellent ideals, what marching and what countermarching there would be! The Presbyterian and the Unitarian, the Roman Catholic and the Agnostic, the Jew and the Christian, also the Christian and the Mohammedan and Buddhist, would find themselves standing side by side, lifting up shining faces to the same eternal verities of righteousness and truth and love. And in the aggregation that would thus be massed in a majestic unity we should have the true Church Universal, a church not of the letter, but of the spirit.

> The truth is her prophetic gift,
> The soul her sacred page,
> And feet on Mercy's errands swift
> Do make her pilgrimage.

Better a religion of high and glorious ideals than any amount of theological conviction without such ideals. Better, too, the apprehension of such ideals and their due reverence than any amount of the most just and admirable intellectual opinion which is mere opinion, and does not wake and stir the soul to "deeds of daring excellence," or the right hand's patient service of which the left hand knoweth not. Can a good tree bring forth evil fruit? Sometimes, apparently. Mr. Emerson sent his pears and apples to the agricultural fair at Concord; and the prize committee visited him to make inquiry how it was possible for him, with such good varieties, to raise such poor specimens. I think that sometimes Unitarians have found themselves making a similar inquiry,— wondering much, and humiliated not a little, when they have found the Unitarian trees — a choice variety, they had supposed — bearing so little fruit of righteousness, so little sympathy, kindliness, and aspiration, and not far away some gnarled and scrubby Presbyterian stock blossoming like an apple-tree in early June, and duly bending to the

ground under the weight of ruddy fruit. "When a god would ride, anything serves him for a chariot"; and when a man, full of all peace and charity, would go riding forth to help and cheer and bless his fellow-men, any creed will bear him on its scaly back as safely as the monster Geryon bore Dante and his guide, in great, long, sweeping circles, through the seventh pit of hell. There are men and women cherishing the harshest creeds who have the tenderest hearts. There are men and women in all the churches whom no church can call its own; who thrill with wonder at the tender grace and solemn mystery of things; who lift up their hearts with awe and reverence and trust to the ineffable Good; who love the things which made the Man of Nazareth what he was; who go about, as he did, doing good to all who are in need of service, small or great.

It is refreshing and consoling to remember that these things are so. But there is danger that their soft and tender radiance may blind us to the fact that we are bound not only to the reverence of all valid ethical and spiritual ideals, but also to the utmost clearness possible of intellectual vision. Intellectual clearness and devotion to ethical and spiritual ideals are not, as many seem to think, opposing terms. The heart does not grow apace, as many fain would have us to believe, upon "the ashes of the burnt-out mind." We want more intellectual life and vigor than we have, not less. The more, the better. Then, however glad we may be, and must be, to find men's ideals transcending their dogmas, we shall so conceive of God that we shall not reverence the loftiest ideals less heartily because we find their personal embodiment, not in Jesus only, or Mary his mother, but in thousands of sons who have lived well, thousands of mothers who have shown forth a tenderness as warm and sweet as Jesus knew on Mary's tender breast. It makes no difference what a man believes? Nay, but it makes a world of difference. Just that. For the world in which we live is fashioned by our thought, our "shaping spirit of imagination."

The ideal is the principal thing. Nevertheless, then, and then only, are we at the top of our condition when we so think that our ideals inhere for us in a divine reality, and are no mere projections of our spiritual imagination on the trackless void. That great scholar, James Darmesteter, found in the development of the Hebrew religion nothing but the development of an ideal,— no approximation, however slight, to a divine reality, a living God. There are many who believe with him; and nothing is more convincing of the validity of his conception than the enthusiasm of his own response to the ideal which was developed by the prophets of Israel, climbing from height to height until upon the summit we see it shining in the face of Joseph's peasant son. But one thing is sure: the prophets never thought or dreamed that they were merely developing and worshipping a moral ideal. They thought they had seen "the king in his beauty," the Father in the fulness of his grace, or at least that the things which they had seen "in clear dream and solemn vision" were parts of his ways, however little was yet known of him. It was a living God whom they adored, not an ideal, however glorious, that was the strength of their heart and their portion forever. Either they could not have forced their lips to prophesy in the name of such an ideal, or it would not have stirred and thrilled and mastered them as did their thought and service of that Yahweh in whom they had put their trust. Its word in their hearts would not have been to them like a fire shut up in their bones, so that they were weary with forbearing, and they could not stay. What was true of them is true of all mankind. In this sense, at least, "The soul knows no persons." However grandly men may be stirred by an ideal of infinite goodness and perfection, they must, I am obliged to think, be stirred more grandly and effectively when they conceive of that ideal as inherent evermore in an Eternal Power, which is forever making for the righteousness of that ideal.

> I steadier step when I recall
> That, if I slip, Thou dost not fall.

No less on this account the truth stands fast that it is mainly by the ideals we cherish that we are transformed into the image of their beauty, truth, and good. And this truth is as far as possible from the untruth which declares that our ideals have no commanding force unless they are embodied in some person, human or divine, and is removed by infinite diameters, on the other hand, from such a position as that of Émile Zola,— that religion is a provisional utility, a plaything which humanity, "still a child, still in the go-cart," cannot yet do without, a good enough thing for those who are not as yet aware that they are being fooled. For, however persistent the reality of religion, and whatever sweet and noble confidence we may have in the efficacy of impersonal ideals, I wonder much how any man can doubt that our ideals become much more persuasive, much more inspiring in their quality and commanding in their force, when they are embodied, or conceived as embodied, in some man or god.

In the mean time the supreme necessity is that men should embody in the concrete of action their ideals of moral excellence, whether these are or are not conceived as inhering in some person, human or divine. There have been men who have imagined that there is no divine embodiment of their ideals, who have nevertheless done well. "O God," said Theodore Parker over the grave in which an honest atheist lay buried, "though he denied thy existence, yet he obeyed thy law." That was doing well; but how shall any man do well while failing, not to embody in the good of action his best thought and dream, but in the stout endeavor to do that? So failing is to see the vision fade. Of all unities of the spirit, that is the best which gathers into one great family all those who try with patient minds to know what things are true, and with courageous hearts to do the best they know.

THE UNKNOWN LIFE.

DID it ever occur to you how little we know of the life of Jesus, even assuming that we do really know all that is set down in the first three Gospels, to say nothing of the fourth? Should we include the legends of the birth and infancy, we should only have an addition of a few days; but, as Martineau has said, "They do not belong to the kind of record that can commend itself by self-evidence; and other evidence they have none." The story of his lagging in the temple with the doctors, while his parents sought him sorrowing, would add another day; but that is manifestly an attempt to fill in the gap of thirty years or more between his birth and the beginning of his ministry,— to make that long and painful silence vocal with his praise. All that we really know of Jesus from the Synoptics is the period of his ministry, and this was from twelve to fifteen months long. Reckoning fifteen, with Martineau, of the four hundred and fifty days, we have some mention of — how many do you think? About thirty-five,— one month and four or five days over constitute the mete and bound of all our knowledge of a life about which more has been written than about any other, and which has shaped the feeling and the action of the world as has no other. These thirty-five reported days are scattered irregularly over the fifteen months of Jesus' ministry. In one place three months and in another two are left in absolute silence. One day, that of the cornfield, exhausts one-tenth of all that Matthew has to tell; another day, one-eighth; another day, one-fifth. One day, that of the fig-tree cursed, exhausts one-seventh of Mark; and five days, one-fourth of Luke. "It appears, therefore, that twelve-thir-

teenths of the ministry which the Evangelists describe is left without a record; that the three Gospels move within the limits of the remaining thirteenth." Now Jesus was born three or four years before the beginning of our era; and he died in April, 35, when he was thirty-eight or thirty-nine years old.* Calling it thirty-nine, the likelier mark, the thirty-five days of his life of which only we have any knowledge constitute one four hundred and tenth of its totality. To one part that we have some knowledge of there are four hundred and nine parts of which we have no knowledge.

Of one part, I say, "we have some knowledge." From this a reverent and honest criticism — that of Martineau, for example — strips away one layer after another of traditional accretion, and then says of what remains, "It is relieved simply of the impossible, and contains only what might be true." The self-consistent and uncontradicted particulars of the Synoptics are not necessarily free from fabulous addition. It is impossible to believe that oral repetition could preserve for thirty, forty, or fifty years the exact features of an event of Jesus' life just as it happened or the very words he spoke. But, putting aside these considerations for the present, let us imagine that we have actual knowledge of one-thirteenth of the brief ministry of Jesus,— one four hundred and tenth of his short life. How small the sum, and yet how infinitely precious! But what of all the rest? We can know nothing, but some things we are able to infer. It is evident from the question, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" that Nazareth was a place of ill-repute; though in what respect it was thought to be "low down" we do not know. But we know that the hills rose pleasantly behind it, and that from its house-tops there was a pleasant look abroad. We know that, whatever games he played besides, he played weddings and funerals, because we have a reminiscence of those games in his words about the people

* Following the chronology of Theodor Keim, which has been seriously questioned and made doubtful by some later critics.

of his generation: "They are like children playing in the market-place, and saying to each other, We have piped unto you, and you have not danced; we have mourned, and you have not lamented." Then, because his father was a carpenter, and his workshop was that and sitting-room and kitchen and sleeping-room all in one, we are just as certain as if it were written so in every one of the four Gospels that he played at carpentry, making houses and synagogues in miniature out of the scattered chips. We know, too, as surely as need be, that he used to attend the village school and sit cross-legged on the floor with his little olive-cheeked companions, reciting the Bible verses deaconed out by the village *hazzan*, the reader of the synagogue. Again, because it was the custom of those times for the son to follow his father's trade, we know well enough that, of the unremembered years, for a full score he labored quietly at Joseph's bench, brooding meanwhile, no doubt, upon the hope of Israel. How much in all those years, which are to us a blank, must have been good for him,— coolness of morning and of evening hours, the coming of the spring, the full-tide of sunlight and at night the moon and stars, water that quenched his thirst, wine that made glad his heart, food simple and yet sweet, the satisfactions of his saw and plane, delights of friendship and domestic love, listenings in the syngogue to the great words of ancient prophecy and psalm and law!

At length his ministry began; and of its term, some fifteen months, we know, as I have said, only a little more than one, thirty-five days of the four hundred and fifty, from any credible record that has come down to us. And the other fourteen months, the other four hundred and fifteen days,— what of them? Were they days and months of inactivity and idleness, marked by no homely parables, no great beatitudes, no warnings and rebukes, no sympathy with passionate error, no blasting of malignant wickedness? It is unthinkable. Doubtless those unrecorded days were just as

full of beautiful and blessed things, both words and deeds, as those that were recorded for our strength and peace. Doubtless some of them have been innocently robbed of their significance to heighten that of the recorded days, for these are often over-full of incident and speech. Some of the parables that are given, some of the memorable words, we may surely pass to the credit of the days that have no memorial. In Paul's Epistles there is preserved the saying, "It is more blessed to give than to receive"; and the injunction at the last supper, "Do this in remembrance of me." These are Paul's only preservations of the words of Jesus. How many others must have slipped away into the unfathomable dark! But the most notable hint in our possession of the good things that have so slipped away is the story of the sinful woman, which now constitutes the first eleven verses of the eighth chapter of *John*. Look at the passage in the revised version, and you will see it is enclosed in brackets, which means that, in reality, it is no part of the Gospel. Four out of five of the great manuscripts which bring us nearest to the first form of the New Testament writings omit it altogether. In other manuscripts it led a wandering life. Once it is found at the *end* of the Fourth Gospel, once in Luke after the twenty-first chapter. Probably it was first added to John in the fourth century. We call it an interposition, and, speaking critically, it is that; but, speaking with moral appreciation, I am inclined to think that we should say that this is the true Gospel and the rest is the interpolation. Certainly, it is more Jesus-like than the Fourth Gospel generally, judging of him as we are bound to by the Synoptic Gospels. It has the account of his individuality, and it is most likely that it is a bit of genuine tradition. But, if there could be one such "precious thing discovered late," discovered *so* late, eluding all the Synoptics, which were completed from forty to sixty years after the death of Jesus, imagine, if you can, how many equal and how many lesser things, yet marvellously fine and

sweet, must have made rare those fourteen months, those four hundred and fifteen days, of which no record of the life of Jesus has been handed down.

These considerations are not, I trust, wholly without interest for you. Nevertheless, I have not detailed them for their intrinsic interest, but because, it seems to me, they are suggestive and symbolical of a wide order of experience. The unknown life of Jesus figures the unknown life of many another friend and saviour of mankind. Even where we seem to know most, there is much — and frequently the greater part — we do not know. The latest researches are always bringing to light new incidents and traits and letters that sometimes confirm the previous impression, sometimes compel us to revise that a good deal. There is the more need of revision because so often the biographers set about, as in the most voluminous life of Lincoln, to improve upon God's work, to present their hero as they think he should have been, not as he really was. They are like sculptors who put a Roman toga on the modern man instead of presenting him in habit as he was. But, in many instances, how slight is even the pretence of knowledge! The greatest name in literature is Shakspere's name, and it is a little more than three centuries since he went up to London to make himself a motley to men's view; and, after all the patient digging of Halliwell-Phillipps and the crowd of his colaborers, how little has been brought to light! We know his mind and art, though not with certainty that he wrote some admirable, or did not write some execrable, things; but of the details of his career and what manner of man he was in his friendships and affections we know next to nothing.

As it is with men, so it is with the great events and processes of history. "History," said Napoleon, "is a fable agreed upon." The traditional view is often very wide off from the truth. And the efforts of the scholar to correct the fable, to substitute a truer for the traditional view, are generally a thankless task. As Lowell says: "The historians

may iron out the shoulders of Richard III. as smooth as they will, but they will never get out the awful wrench that Shakspere put into them." Now there is a Shakspere in the traditional mind that has put just such a wrench into many of the events and processes of history, and it is hard work for the historians to iron them out; and, when they have done their best, how much is still remote! How much still hides itself away from observation! The biographer and the historian are always trying to simplify character and history, to find one cause or a few to account for everything that requires accounting for. But, in reality, character and history are infinitely complex; and so it happens that, after all the labors of the biographers and historians, even the most faithful and intelligent, the unknown life of the world's greatest men and of the great events and processes of history is of great extent, incalculably great. And oftentimes it is things that are most written about and thought about, and especially felt about, that are the least really known. What other matters have been so much written about and thought about and felt about as the Bible and Jesus of Nazareth and the origin of Christianity? Yet is there not, I think, the least exaggeration in the judgment of Martineau that, in the traditional conception of these things, "the whole story of the divine order of the world is dislocated and deformed"?

If, now, you will turn with me from biography and history to science (some would say from the life of man to the life of God, but I will not allow that there is less of God's life in men and history than in flowers and animals and stars),— if you will turn with me to science, you will find that there also the sphere of the known is to that of the unknown as the known month of Jesus' ministry to the fourteen months unknown; nay, as the one four hundred and tenth of his whole life to the four hundred and nine parts that are unknown; nay, nay, but in the deep things of science the proportion of our knowledge to our ignorance is in a much

more extended ratio even than this. This may not appear to be so to the majority of men, who are very greatly impressed by the sum of knowledge that has been amassed by the men of science, as they may well be, for it is very great and glorious; but I am sure that it appears so to the masters in this kind. There is no triter saying than that of Newton, that he had only gathered a few pebbles on the shore of truth's illimitable sea; but for all the march of science from his time to ours (he died in 1727) he has no worthy follower in our own time who could not honestly repeat — I mean adopt — his words. Wonderful to us who are not scientific is the knowledge of the scientific man, but to himself all that he knows compared with the unknown is less than that pin-head on his map which represents the earth compared with that great disc which represents the sun. Meantime how good it is that we can think some of his great thoughts after him, that he will sometimes pause in his great work of original investigation to make it easy for us to do so, as Mr. Francis Darwin did not long ago in the *Century Magazine!*

But what a revelation of the unknown as well as of the known there is in such a presentation! His celestial photographs have revealed to him one hundred and fifteen million separate stars. But what manner of stars are they? Of the same stuff with our little earth. At least the spectroscope has discovered no elements in them which are not of the earth earthy. But what planets swing around their central fires? And, on those planets, what trees and streams are there, what mountains and what seas, what animal forms, what men and women, what struggles, yearnings, aspirations, for the beautiful and good and true? Of all this we know nothing. That we never shall I do not dare to say, so many things which in past times have been declared impossible are the commonplaces of to-day.

As it is with the unknown telescopic, so is it with the unknown microscopic, world: it is an infinite vast in com-

parison with which the microscopic known is but a very little space. I say this advisedly, remembering that the microscopic anatomist counts by millions the fibres of the optic nerve, by millions more the cells of each particular section of the brain, and that a similar wonder of infinitesimals awaits him in whatever field invites his long research. For no one knows so well as the microscopic anatomist that he has not read the ultimate facts. We hear much of the atomic theory; but what is it more than a convenient hypothesis which does not pretend to any ultimate solution of the mystery of matter? How frequently the metaphysician and religionist flout the devotees of science for eving only what they can see! Were it so with them, where would be the atomic theory? For no eye, though reenforced by the most powerful microscope, has ever seen an atom, There are some millions of these hypothetic particles in the minimum visible of the microscope; *i.e.*, the most powerful microscope would have to be some millions of times more powerful than it is to make an atom visible. If a drop of water could be magnified to the size of the earth, the atoms would be about as large as tennis balls. What wonder that so many careful thinkers doubt the existence of these atoms, questioning whether they be anything more or less than so many centres of force! Oh, but we are still far enough from exhausting the wonder of the microcosmic world, for all that has been done! Could we intensify our hearing as we have intensified our sight, who knows but we might hear the music of the spheres? There was a god, Hemidall, in the Norse mythology, who could hear the wool growing on the sheep and the grass growing in the fields. Who knows what worlds of possible sensation and of knowledge are involved for us in darkness and silence? The telephone is a kind of auricular microscope. Why not hear as much finer some day as that makes us hear farther? The worlds on worlds that have been revealed to us by the scientific mind assure us that in worlds beyond

those worlds new marvels wait almost impatiently for the Newtons and the Darwins who are yet to be.

But all things are in God,— all things visible and audible and tangible, all things comprehensible by sense or mind, all things beautiful and lovable, all things human, the events and processes of history, all lives of great and honorable men and of true-hearted women, the gladness of their households and the glory of their times. All things are in God; and so it happens that he is the unknown God to the extent of all the various unknowns that meet us and envelop us, whichever way we turn. The unknown God, not the unknowable. For, as ten thousand and a hundred thousand things which were formerly unknown and seemed unknowable are now perfectly well known, so it must be that millions of things which are now unknown will yet yield up their meaning and their mystery to the sweet patience and indomitable persistency of the men of future times. We may talk of the unknown; but, after what has been accomplished, to talk of the unknowable is to rig out our science in the cast-off clothing of a dead and buried metaphysic. Whether or not God is transcendent of the universe is a problem that has been agitated a good deal of late. It is enough to know that he is infinitely transcendent of the universe as known to us,— infinitely transcendent and yet infinitely knowable. We know in part, and we prophesy in part; but, when that which is perfect is come, then shall we know even as also we are known.

The unknown God! Yes, he is that; for all the various unknowns of history and science and of our common life pour themselves into his great unknown, as the Des Moines and the Missouri and the Illinois and the Ohio and the Big Black and the Arkansas and the Red all pour themselves into the Mississippi's mighty and rejoicing flood. "Unknown and yet well known," may we not say, in the apostle's phrase? Is it not a quantitative rather than a qualitative knowledge that we lack?

To go back to our starting-place: as there we are profoundly ignorant of a multitude of facts, yet have we not attained unto the spirit of the life of the man Jesus? We have no record of fourteen months of the fifteen of his ministry. True; but, even without such hints as Paul's two quotations and the story of the adulterous woman, should we not know that the fourteen unknown months were full to overflowing with the same trust in God, the same love of man, the same compassion for the miserable and suffering, the same scorn of base hypocrisy, the same pity for the sinful and the fallen, that make the little period of his recorded life beautiful with an immeasurable beauty and helpful with an immortal helpfulness? And, though our knowledge of the deep things of God is a much smaller fraction of his wholeness than the fraction known to us of Jesus' ministry, or the much smaller fraction known to us of his whole life, yet there, as here, are not the things we know as infinitely and gloriously suggestive of the things beyond our ken as the waves of the Atlantic that shine on and on as far as we can see are of the infinite of waters that exults with multitudinous laughter for a thousand leagues beyond the boundary of our vision; truly, as Lamb desired, "the commensurate antagonist of the shore." And so it is that the unknown majesty of God becomes to us a source of boundless reverence and worship, awe and praise. There is nothing baser than a mere savage fear or reverence of the unknown, unless it be the temper of the conservative and timorous religionist, who, in modern times, "makes, as it were, an artificial darkness, in order that he may be more religious." Forever memorable upon this head are the great words of Martineau: "The abyss must not be one of total gloom. . . . True reverence can breathe and see only on condition of some alternation of light and darkness, of inner silence and a stir of upper air." "Lo, these are parts of His ways; but how little is yet known of Him." Yet it is what we know that makes the vast unknown radiant and

vocal for the imagination and the heart with infinite possibilities and certainties of wonder and beatitude and peace.

There are some aspects of this matter which come home a little closer to our common, daily life. If, from the little that we know about the social life of this immediate time, its industrial and political life, we should attempt to judge the wide extent of it we do not know, should we not be landed in a state of mind as pessimistic as Tolstoï's or Ibsen's? Quite the contrary.

For every political utterance is exaggerated, and every political action is distorted by the media of partisan interpretation. There is a full account of all things that go wrong in the commercial world, and (naturally) no mention of the innumerable fidelities that keep it sound and whole. To the murderer or the homicide a column is accorded for every line in praise or recognition of men's worthy acts; while, for the papers that maintain a corps to rake the social sewers, all other things together — science and art and education, politics and trade — are less engrossing than the petty scandals of the time. Say I not truly, then, that, if we made the newspaper reports the measure of the known, and from them inferred the rest, the ink of the great pessimists would be none too black to paint the general situation? But a moment's calm reflection is the passing knell of any such result. Some of us have personally known the very men who are so rascally and foolish in the eyes of partisan debate, and we know them to be quite other than they have been written down. They have neither horns nor hoofs; and, however eggregiously they may be mistaken in their opinions, they are desirous — not all of them; I do not say all — of discovering what is true and doing what is right. And so, in the commercial world, for one peculation or abuse of trust there are wide areas of honesty, great multitudes of men who mean not merely to be just, but to be generous in the conduct of their business affairs. And so, again, in the relations of the sexes to each other, the spots

upon the sun are not so small in comparison with its great expanse of undimmed light as are the failures and iniquities in these relations to the unsullied brightness of the countless lives to which truth and purity are an indefeasible possession and an abiding peace. I mean these are the ratios of these things for those who will not allow their judgments to be perverted by the necessary or deliberate inadequacy of the daily press, but who appeal from this to the safer ground of their own personal experience of the facts of social life.

And, even in that sphere of life which is not limited to hearsay or report, how wide the boundaries of the unknown life, how careful we should be to make our inference from what is really known to what is not, instead of in the opposite way!

> "We are spirits clad in veils;
> Man by man was never seen;
> All our deep communing fails
> To remove the shadowy screen."

And how much more the superficial acquaintance of the market-place, the street, the ordinary intercourse of social life. What placid faces oftentimes conceal what tragedies of grief and pain! "To smile and be a villain" is as possible to-day in Brooklyn or New Haven as it was in Hamlet's Elsinore. What do we know of the struggles and temptations of our fellow-men? We are sure that we should never have done so in their places. Nor they in ours. It is the conspiracy of person and event that makes the action good or bad. There are men who go to utter wreck upon the stormy seas who fight more valiantly with passion's wind and wave than some who come into port with colors flying, having lost no sail or spar. Meantime it is a principle of hermeneutics that, in a literary document, the general drift shall interpret the particular obscurity. Shall it not be so with our judgments of our fellow-men? It is of much more importance that we judge men's lives rightly, their obscure passages, than that we judge rightly any Bible text. But, in

sad truth, how often does one doubtful action blot out a lifetime's good endeavor in our judgment of another's good and ill, especially if we are tired of hearing Aristides called the just or have any selfish reason for rejoicing in another's fall! If our lives lift up such a banner for us that "once to have acted nobly seems a reason why we should always do so," so should they, I believe, lift up a banner for our friends and for our enemies, so that, if they have long done well, it shall not lightly be presumed that they have fallen from their high estate.

The unknown life of those with whom we are most intimate, who sit at table with us every day, share with us roof and bed, is one of the mysteries that has often pressed upon the poet's heart until it found relief in song. One sings: —

> "Alas! we think not what we clearly see
> About our hearths,— angels that are to be,
> Or may be, if they will, and we prepare
> Their souls and ours to meet in happy air,—
> A child, a friend, a wife, whose soft heart sings
> In unison with ours, breeding its future wings."

And another sings, as many another might if they *could* sing: —

> "Do you wonder an awe enfolds my love
> For the presence with whom I dwell,
> My inmost friend, but a stranger, too,
> Whom I know not passing well?
>
> "Her soul to me is an upper land
> Where mornings rise unseen
> On pathless mountain mysteries
> And dells of hidden green.
>
> "I am so glad of her gardens sweet,
> Too sacred for me to walk;
> So glad of the sunlit heights too far
> To echo our mingled talk!
>
> "And I try to climb and listen and watch,
> For maybe the sense will grow
> Till into her loneliness I may press
> And all of her sweetness know!"

Shall we say "all"? Or is there for each soul a penetralium, a secret place, which no one may invade,— no, not his dearest friend; and is love then, then only, at its best, when it respects the barrier which makes a privacy for every individual soul? But we may well beware of that accusing, damning ignorance of kindred and of friends, which, when it is too late, smites us with irremediable pain. "Had they known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." How many humble folk are crucified each day afresh by those who learn too late what saintly and angelic beings — ay, what lords of glory — they have hurt and killed!

The unknown life! It is nearer to us than our friend. It is very nigh us, even in our hearts. Well says the ancient hymn,

"How little of ourselves we know!"

And well another cries,—

"Can it be in us all there are heights of will
And shadowy deeps of thought,
A land in the heart of each one's life
With self-surprises fraught?"

The same question came to the Hindu; and he answered it with his doctrine of Karma, the individual inheritance of ancestral life. It came to the Greek also; and he answered it with his doctrine of reminiscence,— something left over from a previous state of beings. If only the surprises might be always those of higher thought and holier will, not sometimes those "when our baser passions speak for us, and we stand by and wonder!" Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. When the good moments come, let us economize them with a firm resolve and an indomitable will, if, haply so, the surprises of unworthy thought and feeling may, if they come at all, find no unguarded place.

THE HIGHER SECULARISM.*

SECULARISM, as commonly understood, is the philosophy and ideal and method of human life and progress that is opposed to other-worldliness; *i.e.*, to that order of ethical conceptions which appeals to theological and religious sanctions. It may be atheistic or agnostic. It was agnostic, I believe, as represented by Mr. George Holyoake, its great English founder. We do not know anything about God or immortality, he said. Therefore, we will not talk about these things or think about them, least of all will we endeavor to utilize them as factors in our every-day affairs. But, while Holyoake was agnostic, if not personally, in the publication of his social ideals, Mr. Bradlaugh, who succeeded to his leadership, was frankly atheistic. He was no doubter. He denied both God and immortality, often with much heat and violence. It is no part of my intention to bring any accusation against these men and their modes of thought and action. If they seem to me hard and narrow, I recognize them as earnest and sincere; and I know that they have furnished a creed and an ideal to many hundreds and thousands of people who have been much in need of a creed and an ideal to steady them and direct their purposes. To make this world a better place to live in is a much better business than to be idly dreaming of a world that will be perfect from the start; and, if the secularists have emphasized too much the material comforts of existence in a world where they have been emphasized too little, they have done a timely work.

Secularism, so called, is itself a higher secularism than

* To be supplemented by a sermon called "Life in Ourselves."

the more common sort which we do not call secularism, but worldliness, meaning by that, devotion to material comforts and advantages, habitual regard for the good opinion of people of wealth and social standing, an intense preoccupation with matters of established form and usage. Here you have the *sæculum*, the world, in the sense in which Jesus found it opposed to him, in the sense in which it has always been opposed to the idealists and the reformers. Surely, that secularism which has for its world the whole circle of human interests between the boundaries of life and death is a higher secularism than this. But is there not a higher still? Does not the world in our habitual speech mean something larger than the circle of these mundane interests, as well as something infinitely larger than the social round of custom and conformity, of wealth and luxury and show,—even the sum of universal order, mystery, and law? Perhaps you have in *your* reading, as I have in mine, found the word "secular" applied to this universal order; and, if it is permissible to use "secular" for universal, then it must be equally permissible to use secularism as the equivalent of universalism,—not the universalism of the sect, but the universalism of science. And so much higher as the secularism of Holyoake and Bradlaugh is than the secularism, the worldliness, of the famed McAllister, the secularism of science and of a religion that takes up into itself the import of science is higher than that of Holyoake and Bradlaugh. Do I exaggerate? On the contrary, I keep well within the bounds of truth and soberness.

But I have not begun my talk in the way that I intended to at first. I intended to begin it with the proverb, "Tenterden steeple was the cause of the Goodwin sands." The higher secularism of which I wish to speak is merely an extension of that proverb which, I suppose, you all have heard and understand. It is a proverb of the connections of things which do not obviously appear. Tenterden steeple *was* the cause of the Goodwin sands? And why? Because—

such is at least one explanation of the proverb — the Tenterden people spent for a fine steeple to their church the money they should have spent for a good breakwater; and the consequence was that stretch of barrenness known as the Goodwin sands, made by the inundations of the German Ocean on the English coast. Nature and life abound in these remote connections. Edward Rowland Sill has a poem celebrating them, which he calls "The Links of Chance." Two Tartar lovers sit gazing on the ground, afraid from the excess of love to look into each other's eyes. The girl picks up a pebble of green jade, and tosses it, indifferent where it falls. Ages roll on. One day the stone catches and holds a seed, whence grass, then shrubs, and last a tree, over whose snaky root one day a conquering chief trips backward, fighting; and half Asia is made free. Here is a parable of widest application. We may rebel against it, but it cannot be escaped. "Beauty," we say, "is only skin-deep." But, when it is Anne Boleyn's, it is deep enough for the foundations of the English Church and Reformation. When it is Cleopatra's, it is deep enough for the foundations of the Roman Empire and Octavius Cæsar's glorious throne. Wonderfully suggestive is Hawthorne's "David Swan," a parable of the things which almost happen.

> "O the little more, and how much it is!
> And the little less, and what worlds away!"

What worlds of happiness, of peace, of character, of accomplishment, of national justice, freedom, realization! Nothing is more discouraging to our sense of a rational order in the world than such great weights upon such little wires, such great events depending on such seeming accidents, such foolish steeples devastating such wide fields of useful, happy toil. But, if there are these links of chance,— of moral chance, however perfect the merely physical causation,— it is at least something to remember that there are

also links of a great chain of natural events which holds our common daily life fast to an anchor buried deep in the most elemental substance of the world, secure against all waves that beat on it, all winds that blow.

Darwin's familiar story of the friendliness of cats to clover is one of the happiest illustrations of those subtle connections and relations which are so far-reaching and important in the sphere of natural causation. It gives to the poet's naming of the bees, "blithe go-betweens," a new and quainter meaning. Darwin found that to the fertilization of red clover the visits of the humble-bees were necessary, as other bees could not reach the nectar. Hence he concluded that, if the humble-bees in England should be generally destroyed, the red clover would correspondingly die out. "But the number of humble-bees in any district depends on the number of field-mice, which destroy their combs and nests"; and a careful observer, who has long attended to the habits of humble-bees, believes that "more than two-thirds of them" are thus annually destroyed. "But the number of mice, as every one knows, is largely dependent on the number of cats that destroy mice." And hence the cats, you see, are very deep in clover, very deeply implicated in its prosperity. Killing the mice that kill the bees; they are the general managers of the Red Clover Fertilization Company; and clover fields are fragrant with the memory of feline virtues of which the cats who exercised them little knew. There could hardly be a better illustration of the proverb, "Tenterden steeple was the cause of the Goodwin sands"; and some one, I believe, has carried this concatenation, so to speak, a step further, and found that maiden ladies are the "first great cause, least understood," of the red clover, because they keep so many cats.

But, of all Tenterden steeples in the range of our experience of individual objects, the tallest is the all-conquering sun. Where can we find within our mundane sphere the

things he does not shape, the strength he does not give? In all the pleasant books John Fiske has written I do not know of a more memorable passage than that one which concludes the chapter on "The Sources of Terrestrial Energy" in his "Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy." Those of you who know it best will not be impatient with its repetition: "When one takes a country ramble on a pleasant summer's day, he may fitly ponder upon the wondrous significance of this law of the transformation of energy. It is wondrous to reflect that all the energy stored up in the timbers of the fences and farm-houses that we pass, as well as the grindstone and the axe lying beside it, and in the iron axles and heavy tires of the cart which stands tipped by the roadside; all the energy given out from moment to moment by the roaring cascade and the busy wheel that rumbles at its foot, by the undulating stalks of corn in the field and the swaying of branches in the forest beyond, by the birds that sing in the tree-tops and the butterflies to which they anon give chase, by the cow standing in the brook and the water which bathes her lazy feet, by the sportsmen who pass shouting in the distance, as well as by their dogs and guns,—that all this multiform energy is nothing but metamorphosed solar radiance, and that all these various objects giving life and cheerfulness to the landscape have been built up into their cognizable forms by the agency of sunbeams such as those by which the scene is now rendered visible." And here I pause in the quotation to invite you to unite with me in wondering how much expense of sunlight was involved in the writing of this passage, seeing that the amount of heat — and the sun's heat, mind you — evolved by the brain in the process of thinking has been not only detected, but measured, and found to vary according to the amount of mental activity going on. "We may well declare with Professor Tyndall," Fiske goes on, "that the grandest conceptions of Dante and Milton are dwarfed in comparison with the truths

which science discloses. But it seems to me, he says, that we may go further than this, and say that we have reached something deeper than poetry. In the sense of illimitable vastness with which we are oppressed and saddened as we strive in thought to follow out the eternal metamorphosis, we may recognize the modern phase of the feeling which led the ancient to fall upon his knees, and adore, after his own crude, symbolic fashion, the invisible Power whereof the infinite web of phenomena is but the visible garment."

And yet, as one has said, "The sun is but a morning star." It is but one star of many millions that the heavens hold. And, however we may isolate the sun from them in our thought, it is never isolated from them in reality. Its motions are determined by their consenting powers. Time was when it was mingled with them in the primeval fiery cloud; and it forever thrills with memories of that early time, and is responsive to the far-off kindred fire that burns on the remotest verge of the ethereal sky. How often does the poet's song anticipate the science of the schools! But it anticipates it only as the early dawn anticipates the splendor of the day. Yet has the dawn its own peculiar beauty and delight. Since the birth of George Herbert (1593) more than three centuries have passed; and yet I doubt if any of the poets have more happily declared than he the extent of man's dependence on the natural order of the world, the immeasurable bounty of that order in its ministration to our human need and joy. "What house more stately hath there been," he asks, "or can be, than is man?"

> "Man is all symmetry,
> Full of proportions, one limb to another,
> And all to all the world besides:
> Each part may call the farthest brother,
> For head with foot have private amity,
> And both with winds and tides.

"Nothing hath got so far
But man hath caught and kept it as his prey;
His eyes dismount the brightest star;
He is in little all the sphere.
Herbs gladly cure our flesh, because that they
Find their acquaintance there.

"For us the winds do blow,
The earth doth rest, heaven move, and fountains flow,
Nothing we see but means our good,
As our delight or as our treasure;
The whole is either our cupboard of food
Or cabinet of pleasure.

"The stars have us to bed;
Night draws the curtain, which the sun withdraws;
Music and light attend our head.
All things unto our flesh are kind
In their descent and being; to our mind
In their ascent and cause.

"More servants wait on man
Than he'll take notice of: in every path
He treads down that which doth befriend him
When sickness makes him pale and wan.
O mighty love! Man is one world, and hath
Another to attend him."

Far be it from me to pretend that every phrase of this, and every quaint conceit in it, have been made good by the advancing knowledge of mankind; and yet I do not know which is the more remarkable, its fine anticipation of the science of our time or the magnificence with which this science has overtopped those fine anticipations. How infinite beyond the scope of Herbert's sense of the sun's daily ministry to human needs is the baldest possible statement of the facts which science has disclosed! And before our coming how the giant toiled to make all things ready for us on our arrival, crumbling the mountains into soil for wheat and corn, urging the rivers onward with their sands to harden into manageable stone, and spread into the

meadow's teeming loam, the prairie's floral pride! Nothing has given a certain class of writers more delight than the abasement of man's self-esteem by the Copernican astronomy. He thought the sun was but a lamp set in the heavens for him. He thought the stars were but a pageant created for his special joy. He thought this tiny earth was central to the solar system and the sidereal universe. Well-cured is he of these conceits; but is it so sure, so very sure, that man as science renders him in his world-relations is less grandly served than at the Ptolemaic board? Must he decline the flattering assurance of the apostle, when he said, "All things are yours"? He must if that is understood to mean that all things are his *exclusively*. My cat is quite as sure that I am his as I am sure that he is mine: more so, if anything, I think. And here you have in little all the sphere of man's relation to the animal and insect world. If we think the creatures ours, they think us theirs, and often with good reason.

But, if they were not created for our exclusive satisfaction and delight, no less they minister to these in various degree. And so, too, if the sun and stars are not merely so many lamps hung for our life's brief festival; if, every star a sun, they have, invisible to us, their planetary systems, and sustain a life as wonderful as ours in millions of attendant orbs larger or smaller than our own,— nevertheless, the sun *does* shine for us, the stars are beautiful for us, as beautiful as if they had no work to do in keeping up the fires that keep their planets' wheels in motion, and supply the heat that warms the sap in trees that we shall never see, and hearts that we shall never know, beating responsive to our own. The word "evolution," much abused and overworn, is a word that is at least the vague, impressive symbol of man's implication in the material universe to an extent of which the earlier science did not dream. Child of the sun is he, whose fire runs in his veins. Child of the universe is he, its brief epitome, in

little all its sphere. Here is the hardest fact, and no mere wild and whirling speech. For no one can exaggerate the multitudinous and subtle ways in which the sun's terrestrial energy impinges on our physical and intellectual and moral powers. Truly, in him we live and move and have our being. But his own strength is not a final term. It is derived. It is a part of the sidereal universe. And we derive through him from that. Yes, we are children of the all; and in our substance we report the power, the beauty, and the majesty of that. This is the infinite life of man. He has a stake in every star, in every atom of the world. Here is the true Homöousion, the reality of that big word about which the Fathers and the Schoolmen made so huge a fight. It means "of the same substance." The Nicene Creed affirmed it of Jesus Christ and God. Our modern science and philosophy affirm it of every man that lives and the wide universe. Of one substance, we and that,— bone of its bone, flesh of its flesh, heart of its heart, spirit of its spirit, life of its life. Because that is what it is, we are what we are. If that were different, we should be different. "I was before Abraham," says the imaginary Jesus of the Fourth Gospel;* and rationalism hesitates to accept a speech so bold. So bold! Why, there is not a man of us who cannot be as bold as that, and still be well within the bounds of modesty. Before Abraham? Millions of years before, hundreds of millions! Before the singing of the morning stars. In the primeval haze of light. The roots of every individual life take hold upon the bases of the world, and spread as far as its remotest bound, if any bound there be.

And here we have that higher secularism of which I pledged myself to speak in the opening paragraphs of my discourse, from which you have thought, perhaps, that I was wandering far away, but on which every moment I have kept my eye as on a beacon light. My higher secularism

* Not but that this Gospel contains some scattered fragments of a genuine tradition.

is the universalism of man's relation to the boundless whole of things. It may be escaped in thought. It cannot be escaped in fact. Even while I was writing, there came to me a new book; and, when I settled down to it, I had not gone many pages before I came upon a catalogue of the different kinds of help the individual man receives in the course of any ordinary day. They come to him from every quarter of the globe, from every nation under heaven. "A million men and women have been working for him, that he may have his day of comfort and pleasure." Look at it in another way. Take an account of stock,— not the day's invoice, but the goods upon the shelves. If I should make a journey round my room, I know that I should come upon the tracks of many thousands whose toil has been co-operant to the end that I might have my fill of useful, beautiful, and helpful things. Nay, sitting at my desk, how many of them are ready for "the harvest of a quiet eye"— Raphael, Rembrandt, Michel Angelo, Correggio, Leonardo, Guercino! And then the books! Thousands of helpers there! Yes, hundreds of thousands, so many of them are the labors of men who have entered into other men's labors, and these into others' farther and farther back in endless arithmetical progression. Here are but two classes of objects. Easily I might name a score, each representative of an innumerable host converging on my pleasant room. Here is a higher secularism already than that of the social reformers who in physical comfort find the top and crown of life. It were well if men could live in common daily view and consciousness of this wondrous solidarity, this stupendous social organism, of which every individual is a helpful or a hindering part. Spencer contending against Frederic Harrison, the Comtist, heaped plenteous scorn upon the Comtist worship of Humanity. But, if his own Absolute were indeed unknowable, then I would say, Give me Humanity a thousand times over, not in its ideal significance, but in its concrete development, for

the object of my admiration, reverence, and love. With all its stumblings and its fallings, with all its miserable imperfections, it is better than an empty name; and it has done great things for us, whereof we are glad.

But this higher secularism of the totality of human life, present and past, is but a hand-breadth to the higher secularism for which I plead as man's inescapable inheritance. For every human life impinging on our own is, like our own, a brother of the sun and the innumerable stars. The universe reports itself in every one of them, through them to you and me. Decentralized are we by the Copernican astronomy? Yes, in the old exclusive fashion. When recommending Chesterfield as a place of summer residence, I told a good woman that it was directly over the centre of the earth. She said, "Is it really, Mr. Chadwick?" But in a universe whose centre is everywhere, whose circumference nowhere, are we not *at the centre*, each and every one of us; all lines of force and beauty in all time, all space, converging on our individual lives? Here is no theosophic fancy. Here is the simple truth of science. World-children are we all. This is the higher secularism for which I plead.

It may, as I have said, be escaped in thought. It cannot be escaped in fact. Why should it be escaped in thought? Why should it not be welcomed, and embraced with manly joy? There is no money in it; but there is better than money,— a great swell and lift and trembling of the heart, an awful and inspiring sense of the responsibility of being thus intimately related to a universe so vast, so orderly, so wonderful. There is the "cosmic enthusiasm" which has consoled the proudest hearts for their lost faith in the traditional interpretations of religion. Then, too, how the old phrases of religion dilate to bursting with the outward stress of the new meanings, if we endeavor to make those phrases the symbols of their immense significance. Say of this great world-order that in it we live and move and have our being, and how much more it means and how much

clearer is the meaning than it was before! Say that He is not far from any one of us, and how wonderfully true that is of a universe that forevermore reports itself completely in our individual life! Here is a Providence at once universal and special, the real presence of the infinite in every nerve and vein and organ of our bodies, in every atom of our palpitating flesh. "Your lives," the apostle said, "are hid with Christ in God." How true that is in this new order of ideas, seeing that every human life is hidden with every other in the mystery of the life universal!

Does any one object that I am using interchangeably the terms God and Universe? But I do this advisedly. The old theology was "without God *in* the world." He was outside of it: a creator, a mechanician. But, if that is the only alternative to atheism, then, in the light of science, atheism must be our choice. There is no hint in science of a power outside of nature acting on it. There is no hint of anything *but* power forever working at its heart. Even the would-be materialist cannot express the truth of matter as it is to him without endowing it with life and purpose, and making it, as Martineau would say, "such extremely clever matter; matter that is up to everything, even to writing 'Hamlet' and finding out [the law of] its own evolution." For modern science and philosophy the living universe is the living God. We may abstract in thought its living principle, as we do the living principle in man. But, in truth and fact, the whole man is body just as much as he is soul; and the whole God is the material universe just as much as he is its interior principle of life and thought and love.

And so the larger secularity for which I plead becomes religion, becomes conscious and loyal relationship with the eternal universe, whose other, more familiar name is God. Is it worth while, think you, to cultivate this larger secularity? You will find excellent men who do not think it is. The lower secularism is good enough for them. They mean

to do good work, to pay their debts, to be good citizens, and faithful in their personal relations. But, when you speak to them of religion, they say, with real or affected modesty, "I guess there has been something left out of me"; and sometimes, you will please notice, they are very proud of the omission. They wear it like a decoration on their breasts. And I am bound to say that these people are often better neighbors and friends than others who are consciously religious. Who more consciously religious than Benvenuto Cellini? but what a precious rascal he was at the same time, albeit with a conscience for his work which was most admirable! But Darwin, atrophied on the religious side, was one of the most excellent of men. These things are palpable. But, though the corruption of the best is the worst, the best is still the best. If to his sincerity and candor, his industry and patience, his great personal kindness and wide human sympathies, Darwin could have added the poetry, the imagination, that would have interpreted for him the religio-cosmical significance of his own great discovery, certainly he would have been more helpful to us all, and his joy in his own work would have been much more full. Let us, by all means, live resolvedly in the good; but, if we can also live resolvedly in the beautiful and the whole, that is so much clear gain. And the wonder to me is that so many are willing to deny themselves the larger scope. We are building our commercial structures twelve, fifteen, and twenty stories high,— most hideous in their dangerous pride,— and they seem to say to men that their thoughts shall not escape beyond these prison walls. But, thank God, the prison pen is always open at the top; and there the immeasurable blue invites the heart of man to rise and mingle with its vastness and explore its deeps. And how can any man do that, and come back to the sanctuary of his own mind, appreciating the infinities and immensities, and the fact that his own personal life is at the confluence of all their mighty streams, and not feel his heart

expand with awe and rapture, nor less with gratefulness and the desire to be a fair and honorable part of that great whole, whose limits evermore elude our eager thought. Such is the re-enforcement which morality gets from religion,— no hell to fear, no heaven to entice, but an atmosphere in which the spirit floats with joyous motion, a consciousness of divine relationship and unity that puts us on our best endeavor, that pleads with us to make our common daily lives sublime with duties faithfully performed and burdens bravely borne, so that we may not be altogether shamed by that imperial estate of which from the foundations of the world we have been lineal heirs. How to begin a service that demands so much,— does that problem trouble you? Nothing is simpler. It is to do the duty that lies nearest your hand. The next will then be plain.

LIFE IN OURSELVES.*

A FEW weeks ago I preached a sermon from this desk on "The Higher Secularism," meaning by that, religion in its universal mood and implication, religion nourished and inspired by an abiding consciousness of our relation to the All,— the All as finding in each one of us some abstract and brief chronicle of its infinity. It was in a vein to which I frequently recur, and in which generally I have your hearty sympathy. Not only so: it was in a vein which is extremely characteristic of our later thought, theological, philosophical, scientific. No one can have noticed at all carefully the trend of this thought without perceiving that it is away from the old idea of a God separate from the universe, a Creator building it in a mechanic kind of way, and towards the idea of a God immanent in matter and in man, the Life of the Universe, unfolding from eternity the mystic rose of its perfection ever new and sweet. The systems of philosophy that have looked this way have been the favorite systems. Men as different in their method as Hegel and Emerson have taught them eloquently and persuasively. Time was when Theodore Parker was almost alone among Unitarians in this way of thinking, and now the exceptions to it in our pulpits are extremely hard to find. Not only so, but it is *par excellence* the philosophy of progressive orthodoxy, which imagines that this philosophy lends itself graciously to a quasi-Trinitarian manipulation. The scientific assure us that for them it is simply a matter of no God at all or this God who is Indwelling Power and Life and Good. In short, the tendency of thought is everywhere, if not to pantheism out and out, to a kind of pantheistic theism; and this tendency has expressed

* Supplementing the April sermon, "The Higher Secularism."

itself in hundreds of the most beautiful and noble passages and sayings that adorn the thought of recent times.

It would be superfluous for me to say how heartily I sympathize with this tendency, which I have indicated rather than described. All that is most poetical, all that is most mystical, all that is most worshipful and religious in our time, has here its root and flower. I do not mean to say that in the conception of a creator-God there were not elements that appealed to the imagination of some people more powerfully than those involved in the conception of God as an Indwelling life. Man as a builder is man in one of the most noble and engaging aspects of his various power, and God as a world-builder is the man-builder raised to the ten thousandth power. God the Creator is, however, God in the remotest past. We think of him as one who was, and not as one who is. But God the indwelling Life,—*his* soul is still engaged upon his world. All mighty winds, all sounds of woods and waters, are but the modulations of his voice. He blushes in the rose; his is the violet's breath, the thrush's song; the light in happy eyes, his light; the smile on happy lips, his smile; the strength in manly limbs, his strength; the thought in eager minds, his thought; the love in faithful hearts, his love. And so at once we have a grander and a nearer God.

"Closer is he than breathing, nearer than hands or feet."

All things are beautiful with his beauty, strong with his strength, warm with his life. It is a conception that makes for poetry, for religiousness, for mystic rapture, for the sense of a perpetual interfusion of our lives with God's as never could or can the conception of a creator-God, building the world six thousand or six million years ago, and standing off, and leaving it to spin forever down the ringing grooves of time and change.

And yet — and now I come to the matter but for which this sermon would never have been written: all that I have said so far, I have said many times before in one form or

another,— and yet, I say, there are voices to which we cannot but attend, which warn us that there is something dangerous as well as something beautiful and tender and beseeching in this pantheistic aspect of the world which is so evidently gaining on the creator notion, and gaining on it rapidly. There are those who "view with alarm," as the politicians say in their platforms, the pantheistic tendency. They concede its poetic quality, its religious quality; but its moral quality they doubt. It enlarges God, they say, at the expense of man. Man is shrivelled in the blaze of infinite perfection. For you will notice, say these earnest people, that the divine influx does not stay itself upon the borders of our human life. It inundates this as masterfully as it inundates the lower levels of the organic and the inorganic world. Time was when the natural and human orders were distinct. But our evolutionary principles have changed all that. The gulf between man and the lower animals has been closed up. The organs and the tissues of the animal anticipate those of man. All that is most human — speech, thought, affection, duty, worship — have their seeds and weak beginnings in the animal organization. Break, in the order of production and causation, there is apparently none whatever. It seems to follow that our human actions, even the most intellectual or moral, are determined as efficiently as the motions of the stars in heaven, the rise and fall of waves upon the beach, the budding of the leaves in spring, the ripening of the fruit in the still autumn days.

This is a line of thought which of late years has been pressing heavily upon many thoughtful minds. The danger for such minds has been not of their being pushed to and over the verge of atheism, but of their being pushed to and over the verge of a*vir*ism.* Atheism is no-God-ism; avirism is no-man-ism; and no-man-ism has been, and is, the danger side for a great many people. Most decidedly it has been

* I am obliged to make my compound from the Latin *vir*, a man, the Greek *anthropos*, not lending itself readily to my purpose.

the danger side for me. I have never had reason to be fearful or even anxious that God would disappear from the horizon of my thought. I have had much reason to be anxious and fearful that man would so disappear. On this field I have had many a troubled night and close-contested day. You will not misunderstand me. It is not for me, or any one, a matter of doubt that Jones, Brown, and Smith are quite as actual and real *objects* as they have ever been supposed to be. What is doubtful is their reality as *subjects*, as individual souls, as persons morally responsible. Are they truly such, or mere effects of various causes? "I have life in myself," says the Fourth Gospel Jesus, "even as the Father hath life in himself." What he affirmed of himself can we affirm of ourselves? Have we life in ourselves, or are we merely incidents of an eternal process of causation, waves of a river that forever flows through time and space? Is the will of man, which we have heretofore imagined to be a *vera causa*, a true cause, actually this, or is it only an effect? We have imagined ourselves to be, at least in some degree, the makers of our own fortunes, the shapers of our own destinies. Are we, instead, the merest puppets of an infinite power, imagining ourselves free, but, in reality, jerked this way and that by wires that go back into a hand behind the scenes?

When I was premeditating this sermon, my friend John W. Day, of Hingham, told a nice story of his little boy, which I foresaw would find a place somewhere in my sermon; and its time has come. It was about his little boy, to whom he had been saying certain pretty things about the pretty flowers, how they do just as they ought to, to which the little boy replied, "But, papa, don't you see: flowers can't *not* be good." Well, there are a great many people who are in the same happy fix. They can't not be good. Somehow, the kindly fates have given to their blood a moral flow. Their organization tends to goodness as a rose-bush tends to roses, and their circumstances are as fortunate for its de-

velopment as the loveliest June weather is for the rose-bushes. On the other hand there are people very differently organized and circumstanced, and these can't not be *bad.* It is as easy for them to go wrong as it is for others to go right. They are prone to evil as the sparks fly upward. Here is no new discovery, but something that has been seen a great deal more plainly during the last few years than at any time before. And the perception means that our life in ourselves — our individuality and responsibility — is threatened latterly, not only from the side of general science and philosophy with their pantheistic tendencies, but also from the particular side of individual organization and environment. There are the men and women who can't *not* be good, and there are the men and women who can't *not* be bad.

> 'Tis as easy *for some* for their hearts to be true
> As for fields to be green or skies to be blue,—
> 'Tis *their* natural way of living.

And it is as hard for others to be good as for cold to warm or heat to freeze or water to run up hill of its own sweet accord. And between the extremes of good and bad there are thousands of intermediate grades of character. But, given their organization and their environment, how much of the final product can be credited to any freedom of the will, any deliberate choice of good or evil things? Here is no matter of mere speculation. Here are considerations which are affecting very seriously the conduct of a great many people. They are asking why they should labor at the dull mechanic oar, when winds and waves over which they have no control are driving them to haven or to wreck? They are giving over a struggle in which their volition is an infinitesimal factor, if it is so much as that. They are saying: "We are so many bubbles on the stream of cosmic tendency. Why should we strive or cry? Willing or unwilling we are subject to the 'One Spirit's plastic stress.' "

What shall we say in answer to these things? What shall

we do, confronted by a situation which contains within itself possibilities of such grave significance? Professor Huxley thought, or said, that, if his moral nature could be wound up like a clock and he was sure that it would be a good time-keeper and rightly measure off the moments of good conduct, he would much prefer such an arrangement to any freedom of the will and doubtful choice of worse or better things. I don't believe that, if Professor Huxley could have chosen deliberately whether he would be a man or a machine, he would have chosen as he said. When he came right up squarely to the choice, I am confident that he would rather have been a bad man than a good machine. If he would not, the name is legion of the man who would. For, even if the alternative to having life in ourselves were to be good moral clocks and strike right every time, can you conceive of anything that would be more fatal to the beauty and splendor of individual character, to the meaning of history, to the lofty fame of those whom of all men we prize the most as worthiest of our high regard? We might still admire the saints and heroes as we admire other *things*,— trees, mountains, rivers, skies, stainless in their blue or beautiful with clouds and stars; but where is the imagination that can measure the difference between a soul consciously devoted to the principles of truth and righteousness, choosing the better way, however hard, scorning delights, living laborious days, of failures making stepping-stones to stern self-mastery, for new heavens of ideal behavior scorning the best already won,— where, I demand, is the imagination that can measure the difference between such a soul and the best piece of moral clock-work possible, such that the products of its wonderful machinery were as much more exalted than the morality of Jesus as the morality of Jesus was more exalted than that of an Emperor Nero or a Pope Alexander VI.? Consider that, if what we call morality were but clock-work, nothing could exceed the limit to which men have been fooled by the unreality of virtue; that all hero-worship and all admiration of

heroic deeds have been in vain; that out of thousands of the noblest books and poems and pictures the meaning would be gone forever, for the reason that what we have admired and honored and revered and loved and followed in the greatest of mankind has been their choice, their free, spontaneous or deliberate choice of things right to things wrong, things hard to things soft and pleasant, things ruinous and life-destroying to things bright and sweet. It is in such choices that the great novels, the great poems, the great statesmen and reformers, have found the climax of their dramatic situations. A world of perfect men and women would not console us for the loss of a world of struggle against odds, of refusal to be counted beaten in the fight, of innumerable crosses upon innumerable Calvaries accepted with clear-eyed intelligence, if, haply, the innumerable crucified might lift others to the height of their self-sacrifice, their vision of the highest good. Even upon the intellectual plane the assurance of life in ourselves is necessary to our self-respect and mutual appreciation.

Dr. Holmes may have said of his "Chambered Nautilus," "When I wrote that, I did better than I could," and the artist often has rejoiced in the sense of something higher than himself conspiring with his eager aim; but think of genius as entirely something from without, unconditioned by any individual purpose, consecration, conscience for ideals, splendid dissatisfaction with what others hail as perfect and complete, and, instead of heightening its meaning, you degrade it infinitely below the standard of the popular belief. Far better than the affectation which denies all personal responsibility for the good thing done, and gives to God alone the glory, is the self-respect which sings as one of our own poets sang:

> "Dear artists, ye—
> Whether in forms of curve or hue
> Or tone your gospels be—
> Say wrong, *This work is not of me,*
> *But God.* It is not true; it is not true.

"Awful is Art, because 'tis *free*
The artist trembles o'er his plan,
Where men his Self must see.
Who made a song or picture? He
Did it, and not another, God nor man.

"My Lord is large, my Lord is strong;
Giving, he gave; my me is mine.
How poor, how strange, how wrong
To dream He wrote the little song
I made to him with love's unforced design!"

That is the truer note, the more honest and sincere. And, if it is so upon the intellectual plane, it is much more obviously so upon the moral. There, too, we recognize the helping and the hindering forces of our organization and environment: "There goes John Newton but for the grace of God." I have found this saying attributed not only to John Newton, but also to Richard Baxter and to John Wesley and to another likelier to have been its author than any of these famous men. But it is something that hundreds and thousands may have said in simple truth, not only good men who have escaped badness, but bad men who have escaped goodness. It is just as good a saying for the bad as for the good. Nevertheless, the good man *knows* that his own will has been a factor in the production of his character. The pious hypocrite may disclaim all credit for his virtue: the honest man will dare affirm that he has done something on his own account, that he has conspired with friendly circumstances and braced himself against opposing elements with indomitable mind.

Thus, in advance of my intention, I am brought face to face with that element in our consciousness which, amidst the flood of pantheistic tendency fed from the heights of both philosophy and science, and swollen by the psychology of organization and environment, is, verily, an island which no sea can overwhelm. It is the element of conscious freedom assuring us that, whatever the fulness and splendor of

the divine immanence, whatever the stress of organization and environment, we have life in ourselves. I am not proposing here and now to work out the logic of this matter. It is quite a different matter from the old problem of free will, fore-knowledge absolute. The best way of meeting that is Professor Harris's in his own "Moral Evolution." He says frankly that he cannot reconcile the two, but that he knows nothing about the absolute foreknowledge of God and a good deal about his own free will; and so he proposes to *act* upon the basis of his knowledge, and not upon the basis of his ignorance. In our case the difficulty is much more real. We *do* know a great deal about the implication of man in universal nature. We cannot find any schism anywhere between him and the lower forms of life. So far as science renders him, he is as much a product of external forces as the rock or wave or tree. And we do know a great deal about organization and environment and their influence upon character and life. And what we know, or seem to know, upon these lines, we cannot in the present state of our knowledge perfectly reconcile with our abiding consciousness of life in ourselves, with our inexpugnable consciousness of a will that is at least a factor in the production of our characters and the shaping of our destinies.

Eliminate this consciousness from human life, and we have seen how it would shrivel to the merest tatter of its present wonderful investiture of power and joy. No, that is not exactly what we have seen. We have seen that without the *reality* of freedom, choice, life in ourselves, all character, heroism, poetry, history, biography, would have the heart of its meaning (and with that the beauty and the glory of it) plucked out of it forever. But the reality is quite a different thing from the consciousness. There is no question about this. It is ineradicable, inexpugnable. But some tell us it has no reality. They say we labor under an illusion, but they admit that it is an excellent illusion. I suppose it was of this that Goethe said, "Whom God deceives is well

deceived." But no, we are never well deceived. Let us know the truth, whatever it may be. But there is no denying that, if the pantheistic tendencies of science and philosophy and the psychology of organization and environment have so denuded us, so eviscerated us, that we have no freedom of the will, no life in ourselves, then all the good they have done for us with their high poetry, and rapturous interflow of God and man, and practical efficiency. is nothing in comparison with the harm that they have done in taking from us that which, however much or little it enricheth them, has made us poor indeed. Do you say we have the facts, and facts are better than the finest theories which they compel us to forego? But I have yet to learn that we are called upon to stultify ourselves, in order that we may justify the ways of God to men. So long as our minds are what they are, we cannot think it best or even well that a Man should be merely a *thing*. We might *say* so in some hour of false humility, but we should be telling an outrageous lie. Man *cannot* think himself something better *as a thing* than *as a soul*, conscious of freedom, with life in itself, choosing the better way, striving in all things for a noble mastery.

And let who will believe that the Eternal Powers are fooling us in this particular, so will not I. And I say this without any wilfulness. I say it because the things which we must believe, which we cannot help believing, are the things which are most likely to be true, at least in some rough way. Man's root in universal nature and in the universal soul of that which we call God impresses me as it does many others as a well-established truth. That man's character is to a wide extent the product of his organization and environment impresses me as it does many others, as another well-established truth. But neither of these truths has the vitality, the insistency, the universality of man's consciousness of life in himself, the power to choose the good and to forego the evil way. As compared with this, they are mere speculations. To act upon them in despite of the ineradicable consciousness of

freedom, because of their apparent tendency to account one's self a *thing*, a being without any *say* in the determination of his life, would be as preposterous as for a man to rate a woman's love by the discriminations of a lover's manual, when her eyes are looking into his with infinite confession. I know well enough that, from man's root in nature and from the plastic force of organization and environment, many, both men and women, in our time have found *excuses* for the abdication of their sovereignty of moral will. I also know that they are nothing but excuses, and that those who have found them have been no less guilty in their secret hearts than if they had sought for them in vain.

What men really believe is that which they cannot escape. Our new-found science and philosophy are not the first modes of thinking that have impeached the reality of human freedom. To-day the orthodox are denouncing the impeachment as the latest form of infidelity. But before Mill and Spencer we had Calvin and Edwards, who were sufficiently orthodox; and their denial of man's life in himself was as positive as anything could be. And yet all of these, the new necessarians and the old, held themselves and others to as strict an account as any of those who stood for freedom and responsibility. What a man cannot help believing, what he believes in spite of his own darling theories which seem to bar his right to his spontaneous affirmations, — that is his real belief. No modern thinker involves man in nature and denies the freedom of his will more absolutely than did Priestley; but Channing, with his lofty sense of moral freedom, was not more exigent with himself and others, when any question of practical duty was at the fore. No thinker since the time of Priestley has held the necessarian position more consistently than John Stuart Mill; and yet "to hell he would go" rather than call evil good or do the least thing that was doubtful in his clear, honest eyes. And no one in our own immediate time has been more deeply imbued with the entire system of belief which is esteemed most

hostile to the principle of human freedom than John Addington Symonds. And what, in his mind, was the upshot of the whole matter? We have it in a poem,— a poem with a superb and most impressive illustration. But you will not find this illustration in any edition of his poems. You will find it in the story of his life. Few men have done so much as he to pluck a splendid and victorious character from a bush that burned with hostile and malignant fire. But the poem — you are waiting to hear that.

"Blame not the times in which we live —
Nor Fortune frail and fugitive;
Blame not thy parents, nor the rule
Of vice or wrong once learned at school.
But blame thyself, O man.

"Although both heaven and earth combined
To mould thy flesh and form thy mind,
Though every thought, word, action, will,
Was framed by powers beyond thee, still
Thou art thyself, O man.

"And self to take or leave is free,
Feeling its own sufficiency:
In spite of science, spite of fate,
The judge within thee soon or late
Will blame but thee, O man.

"Say not: 'I would, but could not: He
Should bear the blame who fashioned me.
Call you mere change of motive choice?'
Scorning such pleas, the inner voice
Cries, 'Thine the deed, O man.'"

I am by no means sure that the brave, cheerful sufferer who wrote this poem was able to assimilate it perfectly with his pantheistic science and his psychology of organization and environment. I am by no means sure that any one, so far, has worked out a perfect reconciliation of the inner consciousness and the outer facts. Or, rather, I am sure that no one has done this in an entirely satisfactory manner. But, when I say that I do not propose to work out that

reconciliation here and now, I must not be understood as saying that the two things stand over against each other in hopeless opposition, and that nothing has been done to assign the limits of the respective spheres. Much has been done; and the result, while leaving freedom a restricted sphere and allowing much to organization and environment, opens the imagination on the God-ward side to a mighty influx of ideas rich and abounding in that higher secularism, that sense of sonship with the All, which I have many times endeavored to impress upon your minds. Not only is the sense of freedom somewhat restricted, but the freedom is recognized as rather something to be bought with a great price than as something given outright into the baby's dimpled hand. And for the restriction there is ample compensation in the larger pity that is developed by the consciousness that men are handicapped by their inheritance and by the circumstances that engird them round. Nevertheless, one thing is absolutely sure: that nothing in our new philosophy or science, biological or psychological, has yet successfully impeached our right to feel that we have life in ourselves. If this cannot stand with those, it must be those that fall. But there will come, there is already coming, a new synthesis, which will unite the inner consciousness and the outer fact in a complete, inspiring harmony. In the mean time how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth us good tidings of his own unalterable faith in the reality of our ability to choose the highest things! More life have we in ourselves for every one who comes to us singing this song of generous and lofty cheer: —

> "It matters not how strait the gate,
> How charged with punishments the scroll,
> I am the master of my fate,
> I am the captain of my soul."

Who would not struggle manfully and suffer much if haply he might sing so brave a song?

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS will publish May 10 "A Life for Liberty: Anti-slavery and Other Letters by Sallie Holley, edited with Introductory Chapters by John W. Chadwick." Sallie Holley was for nearly twenty years a lecturing agent of the American Anti-slavery Society, and for twenty-three years afterward she managed a colored school in Lottsburgh, Va. Her life was one of remarkable devotion and fidelity. Her letters give a vivid picture of the work of an anti-slavery evangelist, its pains and pleasures, its humors and discouragements. Sallie Holley and her friend Caroline Putnam are women whom it is good to know as they are thus revealed. Their devotion to each other equalled that to their common cause. The book may be had for $1.50 by sending that amount with address to the publishers or Mr. Chadwick or Geo. H. Ellis, the publisher of the *Christian Register*, 272 Congress Street, Boston.

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